■ Motoring / C1
Taking a second look at diesel engines

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Recomputation to cut gov't debt by P1 trillion

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Meals and memories

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Australia sends commandos to Iraq to rescue hostages

■ INQUIRER INVESTIGATIVE
Bawasan ang IRA? Ang hinaing ng mga maliliit na bayan
Ngayong alas-8 ng gabi, sa ABC

Chief Justice rules: No texting during office hours

'YAN ANG JUST TIIS!

By Philip C. Tubeza

AUSTERITY measures for immediate implementation in all courts across the country and offices of the judiciary now include 1) no overtime work with

CHIEF/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

78% of Filipinos oppose new taxes, says latest poll

By Fe Zamora

A VAST majority of Filipinos oppose the government's plan to impose new taxes aimed at boosting revenues and averting a looming fiscal crisis and believe the government should instead cut down on wasteful spending, according to results of a survey released yesterday.

78%/ A9

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, September 16, 2004 ★★ 52 pages / 5 sections / vol. 19 / no. 281 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Gov't fat cats under fire

Boncodin: Perks, pay of execs not illegal

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Cynthia D. Balana

MALACAÑANG is powerless to bring down to reasonable levels the salaries and perks of executives of government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and can only appeal to their sense of *delicadeza*, according to Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin. *(See list of top 100 highly paid government executives on Page A15.)*

At a special briefing for the editorial staff of the INQUIRER on Tuesday night, Boncodin said that after President Macapagal-Arroyo had named her nominees to the board and management of GOCCs, they could practically sign their own monthly paychecks.

She said the issue of GOCC directors setting their own salaries and bonuses was not a question of legality because their respective charters exempted them from the government's salary standards. But she said it was improper for GOCC directors and

GOV'T FAT CATS/ A15

HEAVY LOSERS

Budget chief says NFA may be first to go

By Michelle V. Remo
and Christine Gaylican

HEAVILY losing National Food Authority (NFA) is one of the first state-owned companies that may be streamlined or dissolved for aggravating the country's fiscal problem.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, in a talk on Tuesday night with INQUIRER reporters and editors on the country's fiscal situation, said 15 government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) were being studied by the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Finance for streamlining and possible dissolution.

Boncodin said the DBM and the DOF would finish their study of four GOCCs, including the NFA, by Nov. 30.

This means the fate of the employees of the NFA and the three others will be decided on or be-

BUDGET/ A6

GMA called 'a queen' in these trying times

By Juliet L. Javellana

"A QUEEN" for trying times was how President Macapagal-Arroyo came across to visiting international preacher and leadership guru John Maxwell during the 25th National Prayer Breakfast yesterday.

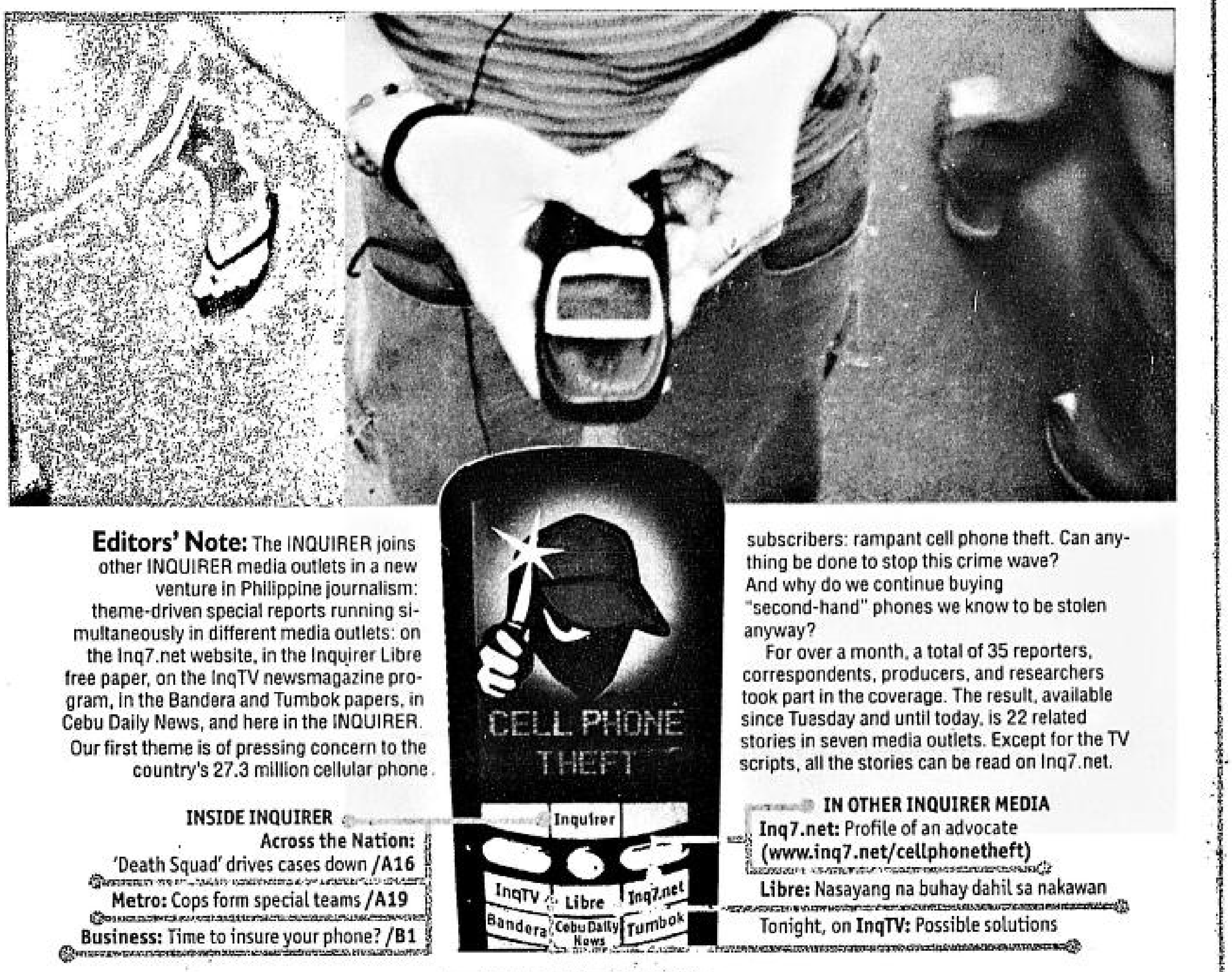
And for the first time in the history of the annual gathering, the President waived the traditional turn to say an inspirational message by way of addressing top government, business and religious leaders.

Ms Arroyo "opted to listen" to Maxwell, according to Jose Tan Ramirez, co-chair of the event held at the Manila Hotel.

In his address, the guest preacher said the story of the biblical Queen Esther "speaks directly" to the President. The message: God's plan for her is in place.

"Madam President," Maxwell said, "I believe you are the queen in the Filipino kingdom for such a time as this."

GMA/ A9



Editors' Note: The INQUIRER joins other INQUIRER media outlets in a new venture in Philippine journalism: theme-driven special reports running simultaneously in different media outlets: on the Inq7.net website, in the Inquirer Libre free paper, on the InqTV newsmagazine program, in the Bandera and Tumbok papers, in Cebu Daily News, and here in the INQUIRER.

Our first theme is of pressing concern to the country's 27.3 million cellular phone subscribers: rampant cell phone theft. Can anything be done to stop this crime wave? And why do we continue buying "second-hand" phones we know to be stolen anyway?

For over a month, a total of 35 reporters, correspondents, producers, and researchers took part in the coverage. The result, available since Tuesday and until today, is 22 related stories in seven media outlets. Except for the TV scripts, all the stories can be read on Inq7.net.

INSIDE INQUIRER
Across the Nation: 'Death Squad' drives cases down /A16
Metro: Cops form special teams /A19
Business: Time to insure your phone? /B1

IN OTHER INQUIRER MEDIA
Inq7.net: Profile of an advocate (www.inq7.net/cellphonetheft)
Libre: Nasayang na buhay dahil sa nakawan
Tonight, on **InqTV:** Possible solutions

TO DIE FOR

'Like stealing part of themselves'

By Volt Contreras

(Last of three parts)

WITH a cell phone, Filipinos hold the world in their hands.

It's an instrument with which they nurture bonds with family and community. It's their pocket-sized bank of secrets, simple joys, and intimate expressions.

Like jewelry, it's their latest status symbol. But more than jewelry, it's also both a functional and emotional extension of their lives.

This is why many will risk danger to defend their phone against an armed predator, two leading scholars of Philippine culture said. They also agreed that the rise in cell phone theft and fencing was no different from the spate of other crimes traceable to mass poverty and to what one of them described as Philippine society's "moral turbulence.".

In separate interviews with the INQUIRER early this month, sociologist Raul Pertierra and humanities professor Felipe de Leon Jr. shared the view that Filipinos were highly "relational" and "expressive" compared to most foreigners—and that the cell phone came along as the perfect outlet for these deeply rooted traits.

It is also "an interactive device," Pertierra said, adding:

"You talk to it, you receive personal messages from it, you have the contact numbers of your family and friends [in it]. It becomes a sort of a prosthesis, a part of yourself.

"I have friends, for example, who have become so dependent on the device that

IT'S LIKE/ A6

Angelo's world: Cell phone theft, drug abuse, jail

By Luige A. del Puerto

The subject's name has been changed.—ED.

THE WORLD of Angelo, cell phone robber and snatcher, is a particularly dark one.

He has landed in jail three times in one city alone, and every time he does, he swears to never again rob or threaten anyone once he gets out.

But he eats his words each time. His addiction to shabu, the poor man's cocaine,

ANGELO'S/ A6

VAL HANDUMON

PEACE, UNITY AND PROGRESS grant us, oh Lord. Participants in the 25th National Prayer Breakfast are led in an invocation by (from left) Vice President Noli de Castro, President Macapagal-Arroyo, Senate President Franklin Drilon, and visiting American preacher John Maxwell. Ms Arroyo recited no prayer of her own.

Gov't lost ₱1 billion in $1-B bond deal

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE CASH-STRAPPED Arroyo administration lost more than P1 billion from the ill-timed $1-billion bond the finance department offered on behalf of National Power Corp., according to banking and government sources.

The faulty timing and the "horrible pricing" of the bonds were the last straw that prompted National Treasurer Mina Figueroa to submit her resignation, the sources said.

The 10- and 15-year sovereign bonds or ROPs (Republic of the Philippines) sold last week were priced very cheap, depriving the government of between $20 million and $27 million in proceeds, the sources said.

"We are talking of $20 million to more than $26 million in foregone proceeds. For a government in deficit. This is too much," a source said.

The borrowing was underwritten by Credit Suisse First Boston, Deutsche Bank and JP Morgan Chase. It was four times oversubscribed, which meant that orders for the bonds reached as much as $4 billion.

A banker pointed out that with the bonds priced so cheap, it was not a surprise that it was oversubscribed.

Based on the prevailing price at that time, the government gave a discount of about a point when it sold the bonds. The next day, prices of the 10- and 15-year ROPs went up by as much as 2 percentage points.

GOV'T LOST/ A15

Officials who quit scored for cop-out

By Norman Bordadora
and Abigail L. Ho

THE PERSONAL reasons given by National Power Corp. president Roger Murga and National Treasurer Mina Figueroa for leaving the government in the middle of a fiscal crisis are not acceptable to the public, a militant group said yesterday.

"Does this mean that the agencies that they are handling are so deep in trouble that they are bailing out early to escape blame and public scrutiny?" asked the head of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos said the timing of Murga and Figueroa's resignation was

OFFICIALS/ A15

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly clourainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY, RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/09/16/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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Defense presents 1st witness for Erap

By Armand N. Nocum

LAWYERS for ousted President Estrada presented their first witness yesterday, 17 months after the prosecution rested its case and three years since the corruption trial began.

Defense counsel Raymond Fortun yesterday presented lawyer David V. Yap, 53, who served as the official clerk during Estrada's aborted impeachment trial at the Senate in December 2000.

Yap testified that Estrada crony Jaime Dichaves admitted in a letter to owning the Velarde account, which the defense argued cleared Estrada of allegations he took bribes from gambling operators and used another name to hide them.

In the document dated Aug. 25, 1999, Dichaves had requested then PCIB senior vice president Romualdo Dee Tang to open a savings and current account at the bank's Juan Luna, Binondo, branch.

"All banking transactions of Jose Velarde shall be coursed through the undersigned. Very truly yours, Jaime Dichaves," the letter said.

Second envelope

The document is part of the second envelope presented during the aborted Estrada impeachment trial, whose non-opening triggered People Power 2. The Velarde account contained, at one point, P3.2 billion pesos, over and above Estrada's P35 million net worth.

The letter was submitted to the Senate during the impeachment trial when Yap was the official custodian of documents.

Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio argued that Yap was "not an expert witness" who could verify the authenticity of the document.

"This (Yap's testimony) has zero value. It's a scrap of paper. They have to present people who executed the document," he said.

Villa-Ignacio added that defense lawyers should work on producing Dichaves, who fled the country and is believed to be staying in Canada, and Tang to "establish the authenticity and truthfulness of the documents."

Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag countered: "The Velarde account belonged to somebody else. That's what we have shown so far. It is not compatible with the theory of the prosecution."

Saguisag also said that he believed Estrada's claims that he did not own the Jose Velarde account. He added that this was his first time to see the documents in the second envelope because they had been subpoenaed in court.

"After the hysteria in 2001 has died down, it now appears that Estrada has been unfairly accused of owning the account," Saguisag said. "It's really quite simple. If it is damaging to the Estradas, why did the prosecution not present the second envelope? It took the defense to present it and long after the civil society groups have exploited it."

Asked if the defense team was going to present Dichaves, Saguisag said he had no knowledge of his whereabouts, "but there should not be any problem presenting the other gentlemen (Tang)."

Co-accused Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and Edward Serapio also attended yesterday's hearing, but the young Estrada was allowed to leave the courtroom early to attend another hearing in the Senate.

The older Estrada earlier asked to attend the Sandiganbayan hearing, but the court thumbed this down. *With AFP*

24 new solons gang up on Diaz

By Cynthia D. Balana

TWENTY-FOUR neophyte House members have filed a complaint against Zambales Rep. Antonio Diaz, saying he had tarnished the image of the Lower House with his much-publicized pseudo-resignation.

The representatives, in a Sept. 14 letter-complaint to ethics committee chair Rep. Roberto Cajes, expressed their "deep concern" over Diaz's actions, saying they did not expect it from a senior colleague whom they once respected.

They asked the ethics committee to impose the proper sanctions on Diaz, a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition, to teach him a lesson.

The complaint was principally filed by Representatives Benjamin Abalos Jr. (Lakas, Mandaluyong) and Crispin Remulla (NPC, Cavite).

'No longer an honor'

Diaz said he was resigning because "it [was] no longer an honor to serve this body, which was once called an august body."

He later said he had resigned because he did not get the deputy speakership position and the pork barrel funds for his projects in his district.

When some offended House leaders suggested that Diaz could be charged for abandoning his post, the Zambales congressman withdrew his resignation.

In a television interview, he said only his constituents could remove him from office since they were the ones who elected him.

The complainants asked the ethics committee to look into the basis of the Diaz's derogatory statements against the House.

"We do believe in democracy at work in this Congress where everyone has the right to air his views and opinions, but not to the extent of maligning its reputation as part of the main branches of the government," the complainants wrote.

"The resignation of Representative Diaz is an indictment against the legislative assembly," they added.

Abalos said Diaz should be sanctioned and made to apologize for his behavior if the reasons he cited were unfounded.

'Bad example'

Laguna Rep. Justin Chipeco, another signatory, said Diaz had set a bad example for the new House members.

The other signatories to the complaint were Representatives Robert Jaworski Jr. (Lakas, Pasig), Teofisto Guingona III (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, Bukidnon), Erico Fabian (Zamboanga City), Sendig Dilangalen (Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Maguindanao), Acmad Tomawis (ALIF party-list group), Roger Mercado (Lakas, Southern Leyte), Raul Gonzalez Jr. (Lakas, Iloilo City), Alfredo Maranon III (NPC, Negros Occidental), Ferjenel Biron (Kampi-Lakas, Iloilo City), Janette Garin (Lakas, Iloilo), Tranquilino Carmona (NPC, Negros Occidental), Anthony Miranda (PDP-Laban, Isabela), Ignacio Arroyo (Kampi, Negros Occidental), Rizalina Seachon-Lanete (NPC, Masbate), Anna York Bondoc (NPC, Pampanga), Gerardo Espina Jr. (NPC, Biliran), Juan Edgardo Angara (LDP, Aurora), Eduardo Firmalo (KNP, Romblon) and Jesus Reynaldo Aquino (Lakas, Pampanga).

Budget chief justifies solons' pork

By Michael Lim Ubac

LEGISLATORS who are holding on to their pork barrel have found an unlikely ally in Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin who is for retaining the congressional allocations in the national budget, at least for 2005.

At a dinner with INQUIRER editors and reporters late Tuesday, Boncodin said the legislators' pork allotments in the 2005 budget "must be kept there" to ensure steady appropriations for capital expenditures such as infrastructure.

Boncodin said that since the pork barrel allocations were already included in the 2005 budget, abolishing it now, as some are proposing, would have the effect of wiping out capital spending from the government's expenditure program for next year.

Capital spending impacts on long-term economic growth and Boncodin warned that the Philippines already had one of the lowest allocations for infrastructure such as roads and schools compared to other Asian countries.

In the 2004 re-enacted budget, Boncodin noted that provisions for infrastructure projects only amounted to 6 percent of the total budget, from 10 percent in 1997 and 9 percent in 1992.

Comparing capital outlays in relation to gross domestic product—the total value of goods and services—the budget secretary said the Philippines only allocated 2.9 percent of its GDP to capital expenditures, compared with Malaysia's 10.2 percent, Vietnam's 8.1 percent, Thailand's 4.4 percent and Singapore's 5.8 percent.

Boncodin said that what should be done was not to abolish the P20-billion pork barrel, or Priority Development Assistance Fund, but to make its disbursements more transparent.

She said that although the pork barrel was used by legislators to ingratiate themselves with constituents, most of the funds actually find their way into public works projects.

She said the accusations of corruption were not all true, based on a list she had of projects funded by the PDAF.

"But I will not also say that all of those [pork barrel funds] have no leakages. My estimate is that there are more good eggs than bad ones," she said.

She said that she had told the representatives that the the trouble was that "none of your constituents are defending you."

Boncodin cited the Philippine General Hospital which she said was a favored recipient of pork from legislators.

"PGH is silent," said Boncodin, who also noted that some of the new buildings in the University of the Philippines were also funded by pork barrel.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has asked Congress to cut its pork barrel fund allocations by 40 percent to help the national government cope with a threatened fiscal crisis.

The House of Representatives responded by announcing that it would give up all its PDAF for 2005, only to admit later that the allocations remained in the proposed General Appropriations Act for next year.

Meanwhile, 27 representatives from 22 of the country's poorest provinces yesterday rejected the proposed abolition of the pork barrel system.

In a resolution authored by Rep. Faysah Dumarpa (Lakas, Lanao del Sur), the House members said the districts and provinces they represented should be spared from any move to scrap the PDAF allocations as this would condemn their constituents to "deeper economic disaster."

Dumarpa said that the other signatories to the resolution were representatives from Abra, Agusan del Sur, Antique, Apayao, Auroria, Basilan, Batanes, Benguet, Biliran, Eastern Samar, Guimaras, Ifugao, Kalinga, Maguindanao, Masbate, Mountain Province, Romblon, Southern Leyte, Sulu, Surigao del Sur, Tawi-Tawi and Lanao del Sur.*With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

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COMMERCIAL VEHICLES	
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b) 2,601 – 3,930 kgs.	690.00
c) over 3,930 kgs.	960.00
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a) 2,600 kgs. or less	P 610.00
b) 2,601 – 3,930 kgs.	860.00
c) over 3,930 kgs.	1,100.00
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PIRA, Inc.
(Philippine Insurance Rating Association)

Allies rally behind Joe de V in solons' revolt over pork

By Carlito Pablo and Cynthia D. Balana

ALLIES of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. yesterday rallied around the House leader as he faced a new revolt by disgruntled congressmen.

"Speaker De Venecia is not in danger at all of losing the speakership," said Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City).

He said the Speaker enjoyed the trust and confidence of most House members despite their differences in how they viewed the issue of the pork barrel and the distribution of committee posts.

"He cannot please all congressmen nor can he give everyone the positions they desire," Nograles said.

"The House is stable. These are just temporary murmurings," said Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) of the feelings of discontent reportedly roiling the House.

Back from Cambodia

De Venecia was scheduled to return home last night from Cambodia where he attended an assembly of the Asean Inter-Parliamentary Organization.

De Venecia is expected to release a policy statement on his return regarding the pork barrel, the fund allocations for legislators which the Speaker had said they were prepared to give up to help ease the budget deficit problem.

Rep. Gerry Salappudin (Lakas, Basilan), the House deputy speaker for Mindanao, said De Venecia's hold over the speakership was "firm and secure."

"He should call for an all-member caucus so the issue of pork barrel will be resolved and clarified," Salappudin said.

A number of lawmakers are protesting De Venecia's earlier statement about the abolition of the pork barrel, saying they were not even consulted.

Rep. Robert Jaworski Jr. (Lakas, Pasig) dismissed the discontent among House members as a "minor communication problem."

"Things will certainly settle down by the time the Speaker gets back to Manila," Jaworski said.

According to Rep. Imee Marcos (KBL, Ilocos Norte), it was a bloc of congressmen loyal to Malacañang that was fanning discontent over the pork barrel issue. She said the group was fanning the pork barrel row to promote an attempt to grab power from De Venecia.

Marcos did not identify the bloc but one congressman said that a group identified with the Palace was negotiating for a merger with the opposition.

Opposition Rep. Ronaldo Zamora (Pwersa ng Masa, San Juan) said that the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) led by Rep. Ronaldo Puno (Antipolo) was contemplating bolting the majority bloc.

Kampi is chaired by President Macapagal-Arroyo who founded the party as the vehicle for her vice-presidential bid in 1998.

Zamora said negotiations between his group and Kampi were already past midstage.

A merger between the Zamora and Kampi blocs would reduce the number of parties affiliated with the majority and increase the size of the Zamora faction of the opposition, giving the latter the means to wrest leadership control of the minority bloc.

Minority bloc

Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) had edged out Zamora by a thin margin in the race for House Minority Leader.

Marcos claimed that "powerful individuals" in Malacañang were upset by the growing sentiment in the Lower House to review the President's pork barrel expenditures and to assert congressional control over the funds.

She said what set the oust-De Venecia plot in motion again was the insistence by the House leadership to return to line-item budgeting which would severely limit the executive department's discretion over fund allocations for various agencies.

"These people want their own man in the Speaker's chair, believing he can pull the recalcitrant lawmakers in the administration line. The bottom line is, they want the President's pork barrel left alone," Marcos said.

She also said that the the switching of allegiances by one or two former Lakas members was expertly played up to create a perception that there was real growing disaffection among De Venecia supporters.

"These intramurals are quite normal but the way these cross-party movements are being played up is not," Marcos said.

"The intention, quite clearly, is to sabotage the balance of power in the House, and this group is still heavy into party-raiding and recruitment," she added.

A number of House members yesterday called on their colleagues to peacefully resolve the disagreements with De Venecia over the issue of the abolition of the pork barrel in order not to further tarnish the image of the chamber.

Singapore keeps terror suspects in jail

SINGAPORE—Singapore Wednesday extended for another two years the detention orders on 17 suspected Islamic militants accused of terrorist plots against foreign and local targets here.

"It is assessed that these persons remain at risk of reinvolvement in terrorism-related activities and their continued preventive detention is necessary," said a government statement.

The suspects were said to be members of the local chapter of the al Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) or of the Philippines-based Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"These 17 detainees have had long and extensive exposure to militant ideology and received military or terrorist training," the statement said. "Several of them were directly involved in terrorism-related activities, including terrorist targeting."

They were among 22 people arrested between August and September 2002 under the Internal Security Act, which allows for detention without trial.

The extension of the detention orders came six days after a car bombing outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta by suspected JI militants killed nine people and injured 180.

The statement said the security threat posed by JI and the MILF in the region "remains real and significant." Singapore, a staunch US ally, has accused the JI and MILF of involvement in plots to bomb the US and Israeli Embassies' along with other targets as part of efforts to destabilize Southeast Asian governments and promote radical Muslim interests in the region.

Among those being detained is Husin bin Ab Aziz, a Singaporean who is not a member of JI but had undergone training at an MILF camp in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. *AFP*

Bangkok stopover dooms French ducks

QUARANTINE officials destroyed 467 French ducks after it was found the shipment passed through Thailand, where nine people have died from avian flu, officials said yesterday.

The consignment of live ducks which originated from France were imported by a local duck farm near Manila over the weekend.

The shipment was seized after it was learned that the commercial flight carrying the ducks made a stopover in Bangkok.

The Veterinary and Quarantine Service said the birds were disposed of Tuesday through "euthanasia and burning," after the airline refused to ship them back to France.

Thailand, one of the world's leading poultry exporters, is struggling to contain the spread of the virus and last week reported its ninth human death.

Health experts have raised fears that the bird flu, or H5N1 virus, could mutate into a highly contagious form that triggers a global human flu pandemic. *AFP*

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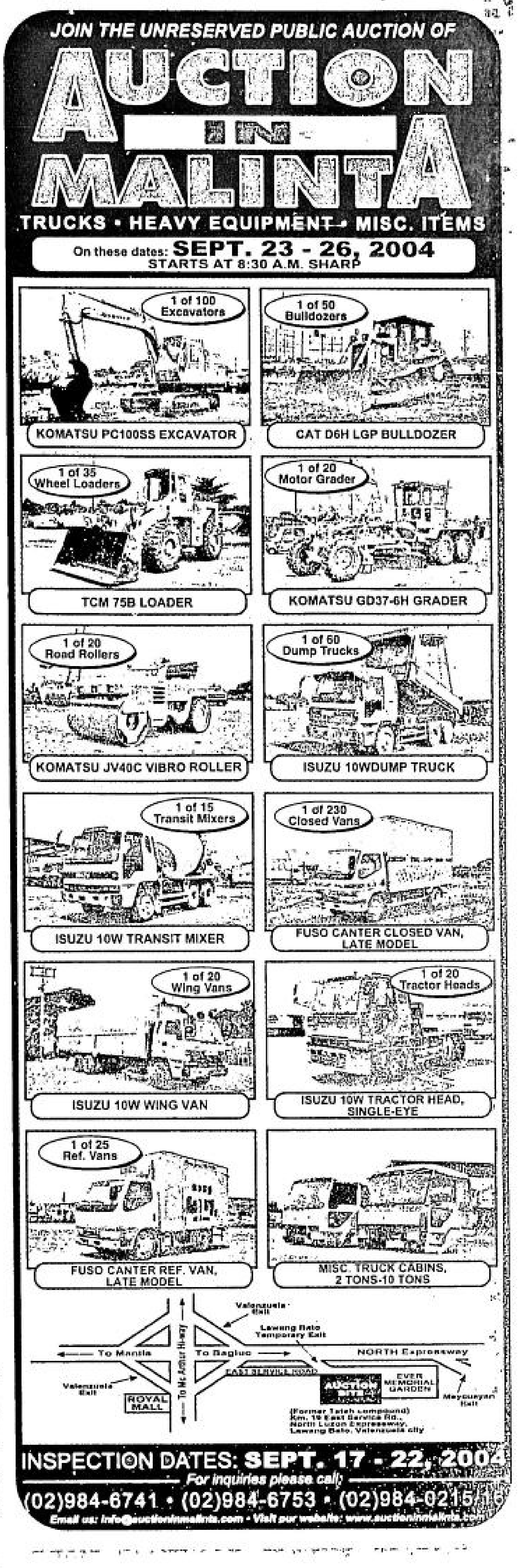
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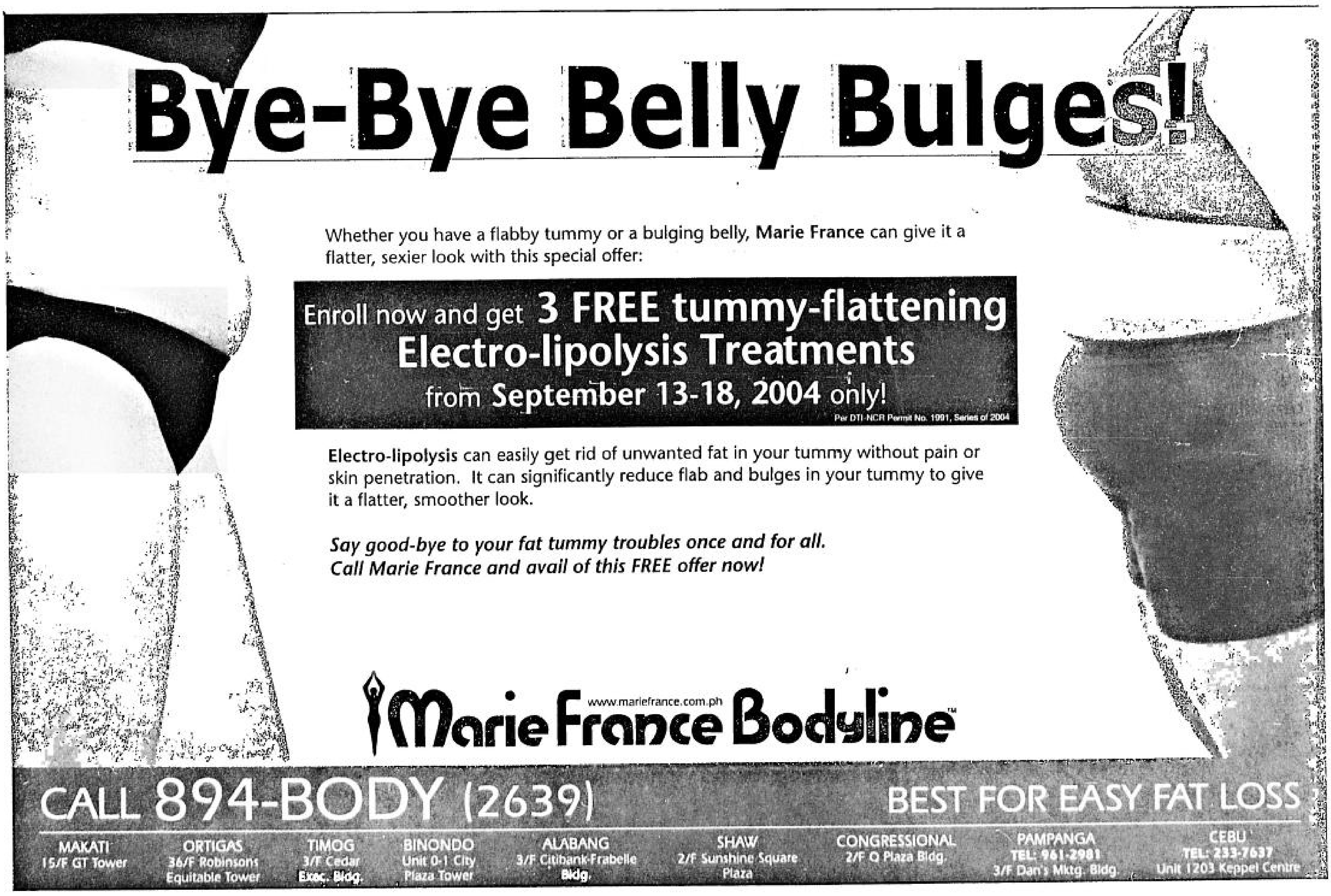
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No trial by publicity, new graft buster vows

By Armand N. Nocum

NO TRIAL by publicity.

This was promised by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) as it started to implement in earnest the government's lifestyle check program.

Newly-appointed PAGC chair Constancia Posadas de Guzman said that this time, they would be careful in releasing to media any data on Cabinet men and Presidential appointees under investigation for graft.

"It's unfair for them especially when it turns out that they're innocent," she said in an interview with PAGC reporters.

In its earlier implementation of the lifestyle check program, Malacañang's Transparency Group and the Department of Finance came under fire for releasing the names and pictures of top government officials although formal graft charges had not been filed against them.

Officials of the Bureau of Customs threatened to resign after the Palace leaked their statement of assets and liabilities to the press.

De Guzman said they would be hiring 50 graft investigators mandated to build a tight case against grafters in government. This would preclude the possibility of the Palace reversing their ruling.

Earlier this year, Malacañang's committee of peers reversed the ruling of the PAGC which found former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and Hernani Braganza guilty of graft and recommended their dismissal from service.

The twin reversals made people wonder if the Palace was serious in fighting graft.

De Guzman said the new graft investigators would be trained by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation agents and local officials who had trained under Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), including newly-appointed PAGC Commissioner Nicasio A. Conti.

"We have to be professional and thorough in what we are doing," she said, adding that they would concentrate on building a strong case that would stand in court.

De Guzman, 48, was undersecretary for internal control at the Department of National Defense before she was named chair of the PAGC. She is currently a member of the Presidential Search Committee.

Last year, the President appointed her chair of the DND's Presidential Task Force on AFP Reforms.

From 2001 to August 2003, she served as the President's appointments secretary.

Before that, she served as director for internal audit at the Department of Social Welfare and Development, then headed by Ms Arroyo.

Suspended fire chief reinstated

SECRETARY Angelo Reyes has ordered the reinstatement of suspended Bureau of Fire Protection chief Supt. Francisco Senot after his six-month suspension expired last week.

The order, which was contained in a memorandum dated Sept. 13, directed Senot to immediately assume his old post and perform his task as BFP chief and effectively revoked the designation of Supt. Rogelio Asignado as BFP chief.

Senot was placed under preventive suspension last March by then Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr. after being implicated in the alleged anomalous purchase of some P11 million worth of office supplies for the BFP and was charged before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Aside from Senot, two other BFP officials—Florante Cruz, BFP finance officer; and Danilo Cabrera, BFP Metro Manila director—were also charged before the Office of the Ombudsman. The case has yet to be resolved.

Interior Undersecretary for Peace and Order Marius Corpus said that by operation of law Senot could already assume his old post. *Nelson Flores*

Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the banner story of the Business section on Page B1—"BIR exceeds August collection goal"—misstated the Bureau of Internal Revenue's collection target for the first eight months of the year. The BIR target was P315.6 billion—not P43.77 billion.

***

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a story on Page 1, "Nat'l treasurer resigns," stated that President Macapagal-Arroyo is "a Georgetown University-educated economist." Ms Arroyo took up AB Economics at Georgetown University in 1964-66 but got her diploma for AB Economics, magna cum laude, from Assumption College in 1968. She obtained her MA Economics degree from Ateneo de Manila University in 1978 and her Ph.D. in Economics from the UP School of Economics in 1985.

Setting the record straight about the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC)

- PNOC is **NOT** losing money, contrary to an earlier erroneous report by the Departments of Finance and Budget and Management
- Prior to my assumption of the PNOC presidency in February 2001, **4 out of the 6 subsidiaries of PNOC** were losing money
- By the time I left PNOC on August 30, 2004, ***ALL*** of PNOC's subsidiaries had become profitable
- PNOC posted a **COA-audited consolidated net income of P4.646 billion** from 2001 - 2003
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'It's like like stealing part of themselves'

From page A1

they become nervous when they don't receive any calls or texts for two or three hours.

"I have interviewed students who said they felt depressed when they got less than 10 text messages a day, because [the frequency of the messages] is one way they can prove how much they are part of their *barkada* (gang)."

Pertierra recalled that three or four years ago he heard of teenagers from lower-income families who, just to look "cool" when taking a stroll in the streets and malls, carried mere cell phone casings. They obviously couldn't afford the hardware yet.

He said the cell phone had become "a symbol in itself," something that you did not really need to use but to "just show off, like jewelry."

This may explain why, he said, "people will defend it with their lives" against a robber, because "it is like stealing a part of themselves."

Pertierra is an anthropologist-sociologist formerly based in Australia and currently teaching at the University of the Philippines and the Ateneo de Manila University.

He is also one of the five authors of the book "Txt-ing Selves—Cell Phones and Philippine Modernity." Published in 2002 and funded by a grant from Nokia Philippines and the Embassy of Finland, the book notes, among others, that cell phones have become a "major icon" of Philippine life, "replac[ing] the jeepney as the expression of what is quintessentially Filipino."

Investing themselves

During his research for the book, Pertierra recalled, some women he interviewed conveyed the feeling of "being violated or raped" after losing their phone to a thief.

"They said they cried, became hysterical and depressed," he said, noting that these were symptoms common among abuse victims.

Anyone would, of course, be extremely annoyed or get a big headache from losing other "practical" valuables like a passport or a wallet containing a driver's license or credit cards. But losing a cell phone could prove unsettling "at a different personal level," Pertierra said.

The professor cited more examples of people "investing a lot of themselves" in a cell phone:

- A Filipino mother working in Hong Kong makes up for her absence by sending text messages to her children in the Philippines daily, to practically run the affairs of the house.
- The children "forward" jokes to the mother just to brighten her day, even green jokes that they may not have the nerve to crack in her presence.
- Lovers' quarrels get mended, not by verbal declarations, but by carefully worded text messages.

But has human life become so cheap that it is now worth risking, or taking, for a cell phone?

Pertierra replied: "That question suggests that human life is very valuable while the cell phone is not that important. But my point is, the cell phone has transformed itself into an essential device that has become equal to human life for many people. Instead of saying that life has become cheaper, I would say that life has become more identified with the cell phone.

"So I'm not surprised that people can get very possessive with their phones, much like with their dignity. And if someone impugns your dignity, would you not defend it with your life?"

Connecting

For De Leon, the cell phone can now be counted as one of the "sacred" possessions of the Filipino—something to protect the way, say, a *balikbayan* would the boxes of *pasalubong* on his trip back to his family.

TO FILIPINOS, the cell phone is both a functional and emotional extension of their lives.

RAFFY LERMA

"We are people who like to connect," said De Leon, who teaches at UP and heads the Akademiya ng Sikolohiya at Kulturang Pilipino (Research House for Philippine Psychology).

"We are not content with just knowing a person's name; we want to know where he lives, where he studies, who his relatives are, so that we can fully connect with this person. We find it odd to find an acquaintance eating alone, so we join him at the table."

Even before the Spanish period, Filipinos have been "communal," De Leon said. "We gather at the corner *sari-sari* store for some *chismisan* (gossip). We converge at the plaza to watch even the rehearsal of a *senakulo* (passion play)."

But the technology and lifestyle of the late 20th century have caused Filipinos to become "isolated" from one another, De Leon pointed out. Because of the washing machine, for example, women no longer do the laundry together by the river or the artesian well. The big crowd of villagers who used to watch shows in plazas have dispersed into movie theaters or have chosen privacy with their TV sets and home video players.

"But Filipinos cannot stand having no contact with *kapwa* (others). And so the cell phone is now the most convenient way of continuing that kind of culture," he said.

De Leon cited studies showing that, among Asians, Filipinos say "I love you" the most often and are tops in remembering birthdays. He said a study done in the late 1970s by the Far Eastern Economic Review magazine showed that Filipinos abroad, even before there were cell phones, made the most frequent overseas calls to their spouses at home in all of East Asia.

"This is not just true with Filipinos or just with cell phones: Anything that connects us to our loved ones and affirms our togetherness, we consider sacred and worth fighting for ... *pwedeng ipagpatayan kung kinakailangan* (something to kill or die for if necessary)," De Leon said.

"We are also a very expressive people," so much so that the Filipino macho can get into a fatal brawl over the microphone in a videoke bar, he said. Again, he added, "because it's important for Filipinos to express themselves."

Universal phenomenon

But as to the stealing and fencing of cell phones—or other items, for that matter—De Leon sought to first put things in perspective: "It happens in any other country; it's a universal human phenomenon, and culture has nothing to do with it."

He further warned: "Let's not fall into the Doña Victorina syndrome and think that something that is negative is unique to Filipinos." (A character in the Rizal novel "Noli Me Tangere," Victorina is a social-climber who feels inferior being a brown-skinned native and masquerades as a Spanish *mestiza*.)

Nevertheless, De Leon attributed the rise of cell phone theft and fencing to factors that exist in Philippine society.

A question posed to him was: How come ordinary citizens no longer seem to think twice when buying a cheap second-hand phone even when there's a great possibility that the phone was stolen and that its original owner got killed for it?

"You can't blame the people," De Leon said. "Filipinos are among the most sensitive in the world. When they begin to see their own lawmakers being exempted from the very laws they make, when the rich get away with crimes involving millions of pesos while a pauper lands in jail for P40, it's easy to understand how they would feel."

View from below

De Leon formulated it thus: How can the Filipino masses, especially the poor, be expected to ponder the "finer" moral or legal questions of fencing when they see themselves as "victims of bigger thefts" that go unpunished in the government or are perpetrated by the powerful elite?

"The view from below is that, no matter what the law says, the poor have a right to do whatever they have to do to survive—as well as enjoy [elite] privileges like cell phones—because they feel they have long been victims of injustice," he said, adding:

"Seeing that the more notorious lawbreakers are in government and the upper class, the common citizen asks: *'Ano? Gusto nila taong bayan lang ang maging masunurin at responsable* (So they think only the masses should be law-abiding and responsible)?'

"You can no longer impose those finer points ... because there's moral turbulence already; it has become meaningless to follow the law."

Pertierra offered a parallel view: "I would not just focus on the cell phone. Start with false diplomas or term papers for sale [at the University Belt in Manila], stolen side mirrors [of cars]... Who among us have never bought a second-hand item, or asked first whether that item was smuggled?"

He further explained that the Philippines had long established an underground market for second-hand goods, and that the cell phone might just happen to be the hottest commodity in that market nowadays.

Like De Leon, Pertierra said the masses "may not feel the slightest hint of guilt [when buying fenced items] because they feel they have been robbed as well."

The prevalent feeling is: "Victim *din ako* (I'm also a victim)."

And if a poor man sees that the rest of the people have cell phones, Pertierra said, "can you really blame him if he settles for a used phone that is offered cheap—even if it might have been stolen?"

Angelo's world: Cell phone theft, drug abuse, jail

From page A1

is too strong.

Drugs lured Angelo into the underworld. He was 19 in 1988 when he and three others younger than he decided that robbing jeepney passengers in front of the Jose Rizal University in Mandaluyong City would allow them to sustain their habit.

He left home when he was only 10. As what usually happens to street kids, he became a hustler and a drug addict.

One day he ran out of money to buy drugs, and he decided to cross the line.

Angelo and his friends got high on *shabu* before making their first robbery. It made them feel stronger, quicker on their feet.

It soon became a grim cycle.

The mobile phone industry took hold in the late 1990s, and boomed. Suddenly, cell phones were everywhere.

"We quickly shifted to stealing mobile phones," Angelo tells the INQUIRER, breaking into a smile. It is noon and we are sitting at the receiving area of a city jail where he and three of his cohorts are being held. (They were arrested separately.)

Angelo became part of a robbery group that victimized commuters in Mandaluyong and Pasig. The group's favorite spot was Edsa Crossing, a heavily populated intersection.

There were nine of them, although they usually broke up into smaller groups.

It's easier that way, Angelo says. "No one tries to fight back because there are just too many of you."

He is lanky and just 5'3, and one wonders how he transforms himself into a menacing hooligan in front of prey bigger than he.

"I'm a good friend," Angelo declares, pain discernible in his voice. "I think I'm such a good friend that I have given so much of myself to my buddies."

Ready buyer

But on to the matter at hand.

It's true what the police say: A cell phone is easier and quicker to dispose of than jewelry or a wristwatch.

For their stolen cell phones, Angelo says his gang has a ready buyer in a shopping center in San Juan.

Whenever they come bearing high-end models, the store owner gives them an additional P2,000—some sort of "cash advance," Angelo says.

The biggest amount they were paid was P10,000 for a single phone, a Nokia 7650.

Lone ranger

Sometimes Angelo strikes alone, snatching phones from jeepney passengers whenever the opportunity presents itself.

He was on his way home on a jeepney in December last year when he noticed a woman passenger holding her cell phone and sending a text message. When she was done, she opened her handbag and slipped the phone inside.

Angelo saw that there was another phone—a high-end unit—in the handbag.

The woman was with a companion, but the thought of two phones in one fell swoop proved too tempting to be ignored.

Angelo snatched the handbag, jumped off the jeepney, and ran. But angry bystanders caught up with him and beat him black and blue.

"My vision still gets hazy sometimes," Angelo says, laughing at his own misery. He seems to have accepted the fact that getting beaten when caught is all part of the job.

"Folks are really angry at snatchers," he chuckles.

Last year, Angelo spent two weeks in a detention center in Pasig. He had declared a holdup inside a jeepney but a woman passenger put up a fight.

"I wanted to stab her but I hesitated. The moment I did, this guy gave me a blow to the head," he says.

He was clapped behind bars that night. But the victims did not pursue the case, and he was soon back in the streets, plying his "trade."

'I won't do it again'

Angelo says he has also been arrested in Cainta and Taytay in Rizal. He easily gets out because no one files charges against him.

"This is the last of it," Angelo says, mostly to himself.

The place is sweltering and visitors are sweating profusely.

"I won't do it anymore once I get out of here. I have two daughters, aged 9 and 12, and I miss them a lot," he says.

Angelo's wife left him four years ago. Their children are with his mother.

Now he has to go back to the cell. Before turning around, he asks for a coin or two.

To buy cigarettes, he says. They're hard to come by in jail.

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Budget chief says NFA may be first to go

From page A1

fore that date.

In the case of the NFA, Boncodin said the DBM and the DOF might not really dissolve the agency but only streamline it. She said departments whose functions the NFA could operate without would be removed.

The government is studying whether the NFA will continue with the subsidy it gives to farmers when it buys their palay (unmilled rice) and sells the polished rice to the public.

Defending the losses of the NFA, officer in charge Gregorio Tan Jr. said his office should not be expected to post profits because its mandate was not to earn but to ensure food security.

"The NFA is not really designed to make money for the national government. We buy palay from the farmers at a higher, subsidized price and at the same time sell them at a lower cost to consumers," he said.

The DBM study of the 15 GOCCs came after the Senate called for an inquiry into the way state-owned firms and their finances are being managed or "mismanaged" by their officials.

A Senate hearing on the government's fiscal position revealed that GOCCs were largely to blame for the huge debt of the country's public sector.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., chair of the Senate finance committee, earlier asked Malacañang to fire the heads of the three GOCCs that are losing the most—National Power Corp., Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) and the NFA.

Napocor president Roger Murga resigned yesterday but would stay on at the state-owned utility until Dec. 31.

Of the three, Napocor has posted the biggest losses and debt. Napocor, which owed P1.3 trillion in 2003, lost more than P150 billion between 1998 and 2003. It is expected to lose P114 billion this year.

The NFA, which owes P25 billion, lost P7.6 billion last year. LRTA's losses last year stood at P3.8 billion.

P5.9T public sector debt

The Senate earlier said that of the P5.3-trillion public sector debt as of September last year, the national government accounted for over P3 trillion while GOCCs accounted for more than P2 trillion.

While the national government had a bigger share, the Senate noted that a substantial amount of government borrowings was intended for lending to or for bailing out of losing GOCCs.

In response to the call to sack the officials of the three GOCCs, Finance Undersecretary Nieves Osorio earlier said that the officials could not be fully blamed for the sorry financial state of the firms they head.

Osorio said the insufficient capital given by the national government to Napocor, at P31 billion, was the reason the power firm needed to make huge borrowings to finance its operations and the building of expensive infrastructure projects.

Peso depreciation

She said the borrowings, mostly from foreign lenders, were bloated by the constant depreciation of the peso.

On the LRTA's losses, Osorio said its poor financial state merely reflected the difficult condition of different mass transit systems all over the world. She said most mass transit systems worldwide were suffering the same fate of huge losses because of the complexities of their operations.

In the case of the NFA, Osorio said it could not be faulted for posting huge losses because its mandate was to buy rice from abroad as the country's rice production remains insufficient to feed the growing Philippine population, and to sell the imported rice at a low price to dealers.

NFA was not intended to become profitable but to ensure rice sufficiency for the country, she said. Under the NFA's charter, it is only required to recover 65 percent of its expenses from the purchase of palay, according to Osorio.

The NFA (formerly known as the National Grains Authority) was created on Sept. 26, 1972 under Presidential Decree No. 4.

Its mission is to promote growth and development of the grains industry, which covers the sub-industries of rice, corn, feed grains, peanuts and mongo. It is also tasked with developing the grains post-harvest systems.

When Presidential Decree No. 1770 was issued on Jan. 14, 1981, the National Grains Authority was renamed the NFA, which has been tasked with covering even non-grain products, including fresh fruits and vegetables, fish and other marine products, and processed and manufactured food.

Sugar procurement

Tan said the NFA could not be easily dissolved.

"It could not be abruptly done. Undersecretary (Nieves) Osorio is one of our board members and she knows the functions of NFA," he noted. "The country's food security is at stake here."

He noted that the attached agency of the Department of Agriculture is even tasked with procuring and selling other commodities such as certified rice seeds, sugar and fertilizers.

For its procurement from farmers, the NFA has allocated P4 billion this year, which was acquired through loans from state-owned banks and are guaranteed by the finance department.

As of July, the NFA imported some 877,000 metric tons of rice to build up the national buffer stocks that could be worth P2.6 billion (at an average of $300 per metric ton excluding the freight costs).

During the first quarter, to keep sugar prices from falling, the NFA bought the commodity at P710 per 50-kg bag. However, this cost the government some P1 billion in additional expenses.

Tan said there were moves to trim down the size of the NFA, which has 5,700 employees nationwide.

"There is a proposal to separate the two main functions of NFA—the regulatory and the trading functions. However, everything has to pass through legislation," he said.

In Congress, a bill seeking to amend the NFA charter has been submitted by Representatives Junie Cua of Quirino and Jose Lacson of Negros Occidental. In the Senate, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. filed a similar bill.

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Congress sets ARMM elections for Aug. 2005

By Carlito Pablo

REGULAR elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao will now be held regularly every three years on the second Monday of August starting August 2005.

The House and Senate bicameral conference panels agreed on this timetable in a meeting Tuesday night to reconcile their respective versions on the ARMM polls.

The measure providing for the regular elections of the region awaits the signature of President Macapagal-Arroyo for it to become a law.

"This will be the last resetting of the ARMM elections as far as Congress is concerned," House Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Rep. Gerry Salapuddin (Lakas, Basilan) said yesterday.

Salapuddin called on ARMM officials, whose terms were effectively extended, to "fulfill the mandate of their office."

ARMM elections were supposed to have been held last Sept. 13 but Congress, based on the initiative of Malacañang, moved for its deferment due to lack of budget and adequate preparations for the polls.

"The resetting is a wise move. This will enable the Commission on Elections time to prepare for the computerization of the elections," Salappudin said.

The conference committee meeting Tuesday night reconciled the two versions.

Salapuddin said that the setting of regular elections will contribute to the stability of the ARMM.

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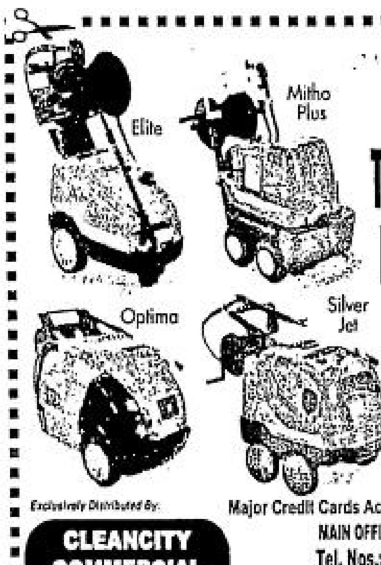

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Erik Santos:
Singing Champion, Son of an Expat Pinoy

Erik Santos talks about
BPI Express Remit
REMITTANCE WITH TEXT ALERT

Remittance Blues ni Tatay

As a son of an Expat Pinoy, Erik Santos understands the difficulties in sending remittance from abroad. Erik relates that while his Tatay sends regular remittances, his mother does not always get them on time, "kaya't hirap na hirap si Nanay".

"Dahil po siguro sa delay in processing ng mga remittance or money transfer companies dahil pasalin-salin ang pera bago makarating sa amin", opines Erik.

"Kaya nga po malaking bagay ngayon na may serbisyong BPI Express Remit. Sa simpleng steps 1-2-3, madali kay Tatay magpadala at lalong madali rin para sa amin matanggap ang perang padala.

Higit sa lahat, BPI pa mismo ang magte-text kay Tatay at sa amin ni Nanay na dumating na ang padala, at puwede nang ma-withdraw sa BPI Express Teller ATMs, kahit anong oras at araw."

"Iba Pa Rin Talaga Pag Bangko, Gaya ng BPI"

"Eh, business po talaga nila yan, eh, lalo pa BPI", says Erik.

To Erik and Nanay, "malaking bagay na walang pag-aalala sa tuwing magpapadala ng pera si Tatay."

BPI recently introduced Express Remit, its on-line, real time remittance facility with text alert. As soon as the remitter sends money through any BPI Express Remit Centers and its affiliated tie-up companies, BPI sends the remitter and his beneficiary a text alert telling them that funds have been credited to their account and that the money can now be withdrawn in any of BPI's more than 1,200 ATMs nationwide, any time, any day, whether you have a BPI Express Teller ATM card or the Express Cash card.

The text alert is free of charge and can be received through any cellphone network provider.

Doing it the Express Online Way

"Sabi ko nga rin po kay Tatay, mag-enrol kami sa BPI Express Online. Kung mabilis na ang Express Remit, mas mabilis pa ang remittance kung funds transfer from Tatay's BPI Express Teller Account to my Express Teller account.

Yung dollar na kinikita ni Tatay, puwede niyang ilipat from his BPI Express Teller Dollar Savings Account to my BPI Peso Express Teller Account, on-line, real time. Malaki pa ang palitan ng dollar to peso sa BPI Express Online," Erik continues.

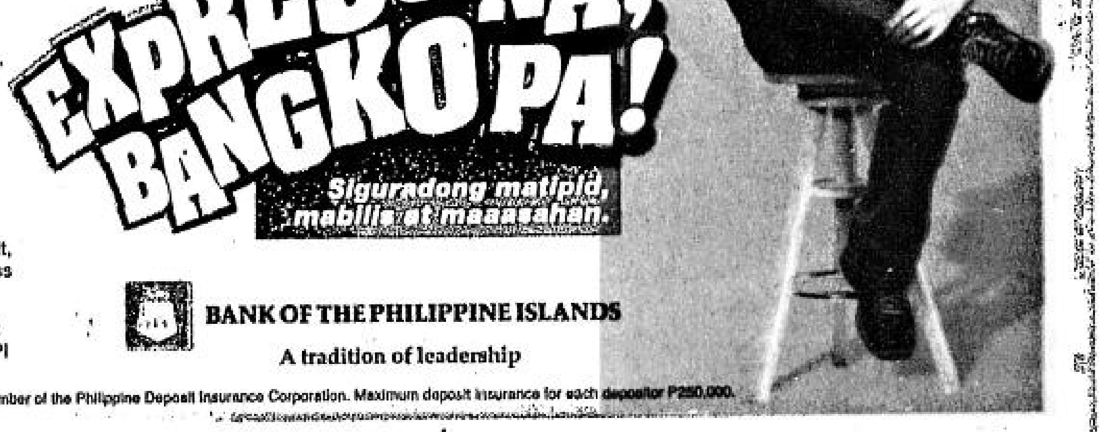
In this case, Mr. Renato Santos can keep his dollars in his account and exchange them to pesos only when he needs to send money to his loved ones in the Philippines, with BPI Express Online's FX facility.

Express Advice for Expat Pinoys: Invest Safely and Wisely

For the Expat Pinoys, BPI has services that go beyond remittances. BPI has a full program of personal financial planning and management for all Filipinos, working or living abroad - the BPI Expat Pinoys Program. This includes helping them get auto and housing loans, even insurance plans. Its mission is to help our kababayans achieve their dreams and aspirations - the very reasons for which they leave the country in search of the proverbial greener pasture in a foreign land.

"Kaya ang advice ko sa mga beneficiaries ng Expat Pinoy, ikuwento sa inyong mga kapamilya sa abroad na mag-BPI Express Remit na sila."

"Buti na lang, may bangkong tulad ng BPI ngayon. May siguradong gagabay sa mga Expat Pinoys na tulad ni Tatay upang maabot din nila ang kanilang mga pangarap," Erik ends.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BOOK ON RM AWARDEES

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation and Anvil Publishing have come out with the book, "Great Men and Women of Asia," the first in a planned five-volume series to mark the RM Awards' 50th year and the late President's centenary. The book, featuring biographical sketches of the first 15 RM Awardees (1958-1967), was launched during a recent tri-media event held at the Ramon Magsaysay Center, where guests previewed a documentary and had a real-time chat with awardees Thai Sen. Mechai Viravaidya and Naga Mayor Jesse Robredo. In photo, book editor Lorna Kalaw-Tirol (right) introduces the authors, (from left) Ma. Socorro Naguit, Pennie Azarcon-de la Cruz, Ester G. Dipasupil, Ceres P. Doyo and Angelina G. Goloy. In foreground are foundation staff member Sandy de la Cruz and student Pedro Caballero.

Gov't wins tax case, finally

SC orders Toda heirs to pay ₱79M on land deal

By Philip C. Tubeza

AFTER a string of losses, the government yesterday won a P79-million tax evasion case before the Supreme Court against the former owner of Philippine Airlines.

In a 17-page decision, the tribunal ordered the estate of the late businessman Benigno P. Toda Jr. to pay the government P79,099,999.22 "plus legal interest" for the sale of the 16-story Cibeles building and the two parcels of land on which it stands on Ayala Avenue in August 1989.

It said Cibeles Insurance Corp. (CIC), which Toda owned 99.991 percent, illegally evaded corporate income taxes after it sold the building to Rafael Altonaga for P100 million on August 30, 1989. That same day, Altonaga sold the property to Royal Match Inc. (RMI) for P200 million.

"The scheme resorted to by CIC in making it appear that there were two sales of the subject properties from CIC to Altonaga, and then from Altonaga to RMI cannot be considered a legitimate tax planning. Such scheme is tainted with fraud," said the ruling penned by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

The court said that it was "obvious" that the objective of the sale to Altonaga was to reduce the amount of tax to be paid since the transfer from him to RMI would then subject CIC's income to the five percent individual capital gains tax, and not the 35 percent corporate income tax.

When CIC filed its corporate annual income tax return for 1989, it declared the amount of P75,728.021 as its gain from the sale of the real property. It paid P26,341,207 for its net taxable income of P75,987,725 after crediting withholding taxes of P254,497.

According to the tribunal, the sale to Altonaga was a mere sham, "a tax ploy ... without business purpose and economic substance."

The court said it found out that Altonaga never controlled the property and did not enjoy normal benefits and burdens of ownership and that the real buyer of the properties was RMI.

It said Toda's estate even admitted that Altonaga was a mere conduit when it declared that the sale to him of the building was part of CIC's tax planning scheme.

The tribunal said Toda's estate cannot deny liability by invoking the separate corporate personality of the CIC because its obligation came from Toda's Deed of Sale of Shares of Stock in CIC.

In that deed, Toda agreed to hold that Cibeles and the buyer of his shares of stock was free from "any and all income tax liabilities" of Cibeles for the years 1987, 1988, and 1989, "thereby holding himself personally liable."

In July 1990, Toda sold all his shares in CIC to a certain Le Hun Choa for P12.5 million. Toda died in January 1994.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue sent an assessment notice to the Toda estate in 1995 and demanded that it pay up.

The estate protested but then Commissioner of Internal Revenue Liwayway Vinzons-Chato dismissed the protest, saying that CIC deliberately perpetuated a fraudulent scheme to avoid paying taxes.

Toda's estate went to the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) and won. The government appealed to the Court of Appeals but it upheld the CTA ruling. The government then went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that Toda's estate was liable.

Toda was majority owner of Philippine Airlines until the government virtually took over the flag carrier during the Marcos years.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, September 16, 2004
24th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 Cor 15:1-11
Gospel: Lk 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to share his meal, so he went to the Pharisee's home and as usual reclined on the sofa to eat. And it happened that a woman of this town, who was known as a sinner, heard that he was in the Pharisee's house. She brought a precious jar of perfume and stood behind him at his feet, weeping. She wet his feet with tears, she dried them with her hair and kissed his feet and poured the perfume on them.

The Pharisee who had invited Jesus was watching and thought, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what sort of person is touching him; isn't this woman a sinner?"

Then Jesus spoke to the Pharisee and said, "Simon, I have something to ask you." He answered, "Speak, master." And Jesus said, "Two people were in debt to the same creditor. One owed him five hundred silver coins, and the other fifty. As they were unable to pay him back, he graciously canceled the debts of both. Now, which of them will love him more?"

Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, who was forgiven more." And Jesus said, "You are right." And turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? You gave me no water for my feet when I entered your house, but she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You didn't welcome me with a kiss, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since she came in. You provided no oil for my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. This is why, I tell you, her sins, her many sins, are forgiven, because of her great love. But the one who is forgiven little, has little love."

Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." The others sitting with him at the table began to wonder, "Now this man claims to forgive sins!" But Jesus again spoke to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Commentary

IT was probably to get a better look at him that Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to a meal. He omitted all the normal courtesies for receiving a guest. When you invited a Rabbi to your house, it was normal to place your hand on his shoulder and give him the kiss of peace, to bathe his feet (it is a very dusty country), and to burn a grain of incense or put a drop of attar of roses on his head. Simon the Pharisee had done none of these things on receiving Jesus into his house, and this must have been a pointed discourtesy.

There is great irony in the fact that, without knowing it, a woman of the streets paid him the very courtesies that his host had so rudely omitted. Meanwhile Simon thought to himself, "If this man were a prophet." Simon's thought was so conventional that it wasn't thought at all. A prophet might be expected to surprise people and jolt them out of their fixed minds. But for Simon, a prophet would be someone who pried into people's hearts in order to judge and condemn them-just as the Pharisees did! A prophet would be someone who kept the line of division clear: sinner/saint. He wasn't ready and he couldn't imagine a Messiah who would "welcome sinners and eat with them."

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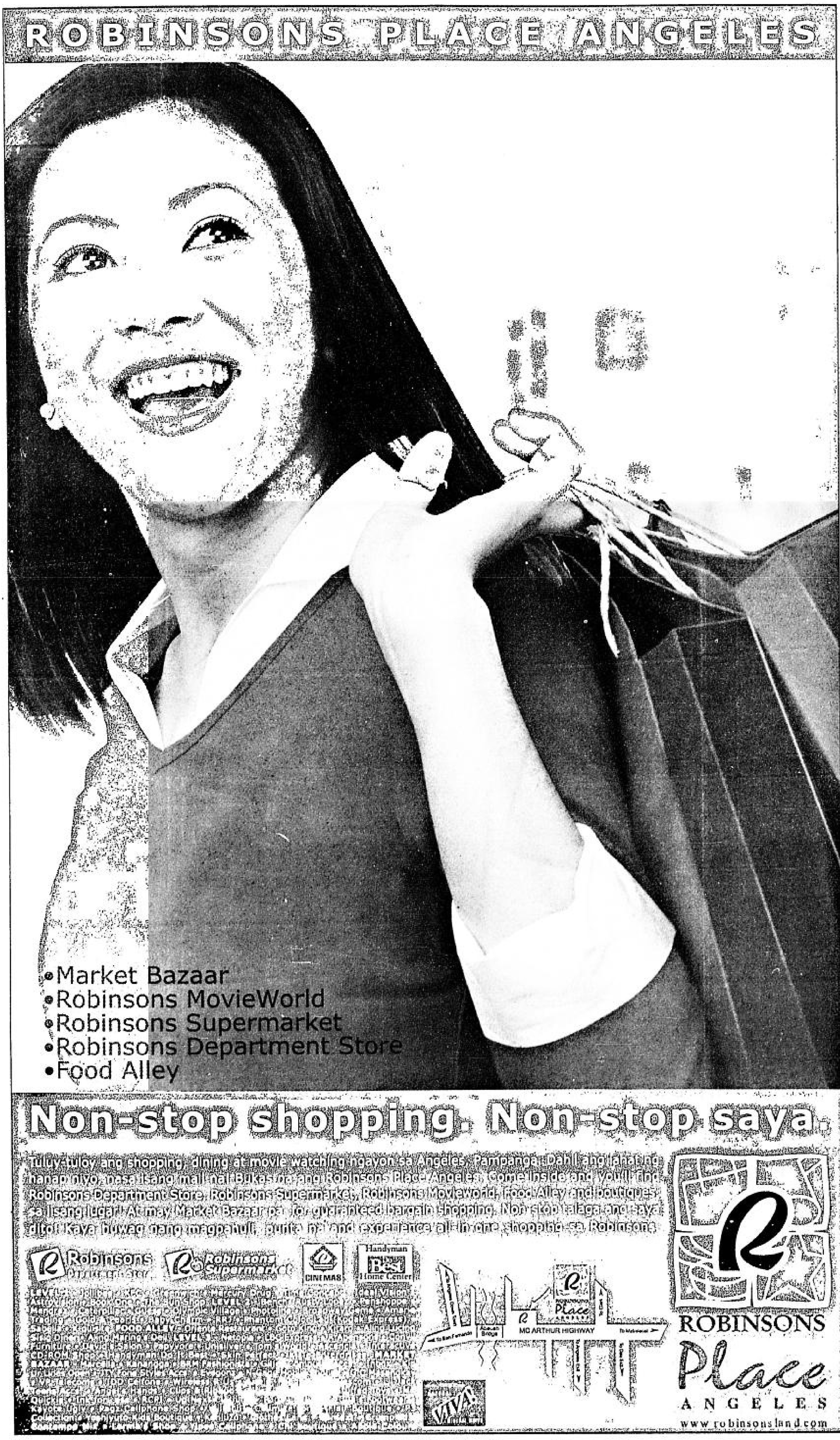

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78% of Filipinos oppose new taxes, says latest poll

From page A1

The survey, conducted by Pulse Asia, Inc., showed that 78 percent of Filipinos saw no need for new taxes as long as the government strengthened its tax collection efforts while 77 percent believed the government should curb wasteful spending.

"In general, Filipinos disagree with the imposition of new or increased taxes as a first option and would rather see government cut wasteful spending due to inefficiency and corruption," Pulse Asia said.

At least 49 percent disagreed with government plans to borrow money to finance present needs, while 29 percent believed this was OK because the economy would recover in the future, the survey showed.

Almost four in 10 Filipinos, or 39 percent, believed the government should improve its tax collection instead of imposing new taxes, the survey also showed.

But 30 percent, however, said they would not oppose new taxes if this would lead to the improvement in the quality of government services.

The survey said that a "combination of improved tax collection, reduced government spending together with no new taxes or tax increases" is acceptable to a third of Filipinos. Only a fifth of Filipinos prefer improved tax collection and reduced government spending but are amenable to new or higher taxes if these would result in better services.

Agreement to new or increased taxes is higher among urban areas in Mindanao (44 percent) and lower among rural areas in the Visayas (21 percent). Disagreement to such taxes is consistent across all socioeconomic classes but is higher among Visayans (57 percent) and lower among Mindanaoans (38 percent).

Pulse Asia conducted the survey from June 22 to July 3, covering 1, 200 respondents, all Filipinos aged 18 years old and above. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points and a 95-percent confidence level, Pulse Asia executive director Dr. Ana Maria Tabunda said.

The survey was conducted to get the Filipinos' views on how the government may address the budget deficit.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier said the Philippines was in the "midst of a fiscal crisis," echoing warnings by nine professors from the state-run University of the Philippines that the country risked an Argentine-type debt crisis due to its high budget deficit and mounting external debt.

Ms Arroyo has asked Congress to pass a controversial tax package to raise P80 billion in revenues and has ordered all government agencies to adopt austerity measures.

The tax package includes shifting to a gross income tax system, repealing the value-added tax system, taxing the windfall of profits of telecommunication firms, raising revenues from alcohol and tobacco products and from petroleum products, rationalizing fiscal incentives, instituting a targeted tax amnesty and offering a performance-driven system for revenue agencies.

The Pulse Asia survey showed that 84 percent of respondents from Metro Manila believed the government should observe austerity, and 88 percent from the ABC economic classes wanted the government to cut down unnecessary expenses.

A high 59 percent of classes ABC "disagreed" with government plans for more borrowings. The disagreement was highest at 58 percent in Metro Manila, and lowest in Mindanao at 35 percent. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Chief Justice rules: No texting

From page A1

pay, 2) no hiring of casual employees, and 3) no creation of new positions.

In a sentence: no texting during office hours.

If court employees focused on their work at all times, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. explained, there would be no need for overtime work, casual employees and new positions.

Henceforth, he said, sending text messages would be allowed only "in emergency situations."

The new regulations were contained in an administrative circular dated Sept. 6.

In the circular, Davide also discouraged luncheon meetings and foreign trips, limited foreign and local official trips, and gave specific instructions on use of supplies and consumption of electricity.

Room to bargain

Mostly, the circular points left some room for bargaining.

Exempted from the no-overtime-pay rule were employees required by the Chief Justice or the associate justices ("a maximum of three personnel for each"), the justices' official drivers, and those whose work extended beyond office hours due to "compelling" reasons.

Davide said new casual employees would be hired only as replacements for those whose appointments could not be renewed, but whose services "are extremely and urgently needed."

No vacant positions in "courts of all levels" would be filled up, he added, except those needed in the Action Program for Judicial Reform (APJR), and those for which applicants were already being considered. New positions would have to be "justified by a compelling need."

Contracts of incumbent consultants would not be renewed, either, unless there was an "absolute necessity." Davide said this meant the work could not be done by organic personnel, or the position fell under a loan or grant requirement "for a program or project covered by the APJR."

Davide also ordered that no committees or task forces should be created unless "urgently needed" as determined by him or when required by the APJR.

Workshops, seminars, conferences and other similar activities for next year would be limited to those deemed "extremely or urgently needed," and those that he approved, Davide said. "For the rest of 2004, those that have already been scheduled must be re-evaluated as to their necessity and urgency."

'Justifiable cause'

"Luncheon meetings are discouraged unless warranted by justifiable cause," he added.

Foreign travels would be limited to judiciary members "needed" in international conferences, seminars, and training workshops funded by foreign donors or by the Supreme Court, "if they are related to the APJR."

As for local trips, they "should be done only in connection with the performance of official duties and when demanded by the urgency of the service," Davide said.

Inside the offices, only electric lights, air-conditioning units, and elevators that were "reasonably needed" should be used to reduce electricity consumption, the Chief Justice specified.

He added that the purchase and use of equipment and supplies, would be further regulated, and that stricter guidelines on repairs and renovations have also been issued.

This one sounded a little more final: "The number of laborers or those covered by contracts for services in the SC should be reduced by at least 40 percent."

Earlier, Davide issued stringent guidelines on the use of SC vehicles, fuel consumption and car maintenance services.

GMA called 'a queen' . . .

From page A1

Esther was a young Israelite orphan who became queen of Persia (now Iran) and risked her life to save her people. When a cousin who worked in the household of King Ahasuerus asked Esther to intercede for the Jews—who had been condemned to death by royal decree—the queen was very hesitant and nervous.

The cousin persuaded her by saying there was a reason she had become queen at that time.

"With those words," Maxwell said, "Esther understood for the first time that being a leader was not all privilege [or] position; that it was to make a difference in people's lives."

Then he vowed to pray that Ms Arroyo thus be given the "wisdom, strength and courage" for her daunting task, and gave her a guarantee: "If you trust Him, I promise you this—He would be faithful to you, and help you to be faithful to the people, and the best days of this great country are the days ahead."

Maxwell said the Philippines—and the Filipinos—were worth his 18-hour trip from the United States. "You are the friendliest people in Asia," he said. This is his third visit to the country.

His two organizations, Injoy and Equip Foundation—aim to develop one million government, church and corporate "leaders" all over the world.

At present, he said, his two organizations have 150,000 Filipinos in various training programs.

Respite from crisis

The other participants in yesterday's prayer breakfast "for peace, unity and progress" were Vice President Noli de Castro, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar, Supreme Court Justice Artemio Panganiban, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr., and Datu Ibrahim Paglas III. Former President Fidel Ramos was also present.

In his prayer for the nation and its leaders, Romulo said he saw "such pain" in the eyes of the Filipino people. "They watch us, their leaders, with immeasurable anguish for sins committed in the past, and for promises to be kept in the future."

On the other hand, the foreign affairs chief added, President Arroyo "looks at her people, with hope in her eyes. She leads by example and tells us to sacrifice, to live humbly like You, to sow peace like You, to bear the cross for others like You."

Rosales spoke of the need for "leadership vision" as he drew attention to the "massive poverty and the disturbing destitution" in the country.

"A visionless leadership is a betrayal of the flock or the people," he said.

"The wealthy and the poor ... say the same prayer and read the same Word of God," the archbishop noted. But "obviously," he said, the two did not understand it in the same way.

It was the leader's task, Rosales stressed, to "democratize the desires and prayers of the people, [seeing] that justice to one [can be] an injustice to another."

The Defense Secretary Cruz prayed for peace and solidarity.

"Unite us in these trying times. Open our hearts and minds and teach us to have understanding and respect [for one another]," Cruz said.

Ramos found Maxwell's message "timely and appropriate."

"I have never talked to this guy before," the former President told the INQUIRER. "But he said the very same things that we should have learned many, many years ago. Let's just do them now."

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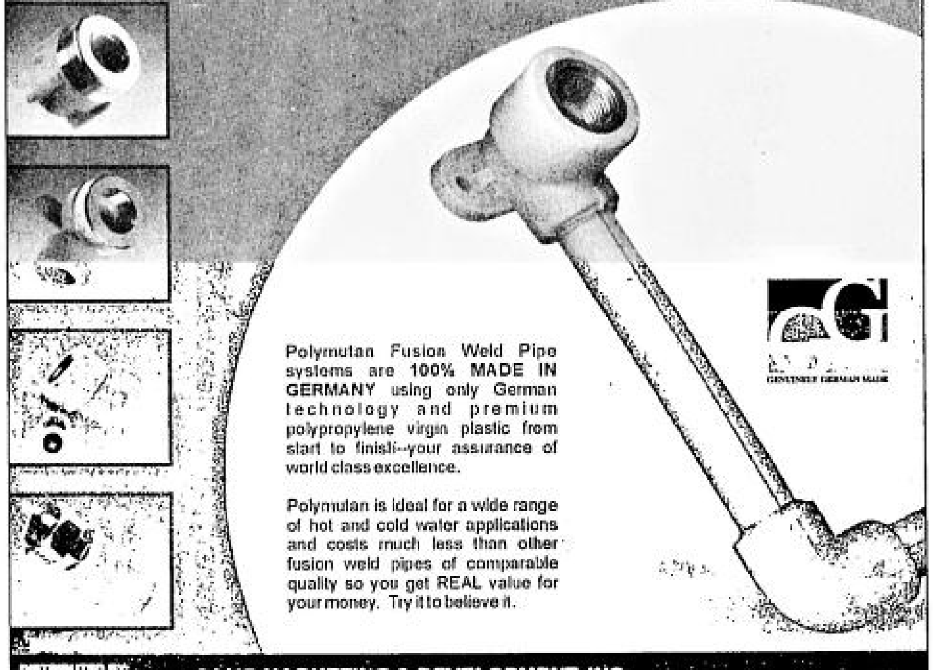

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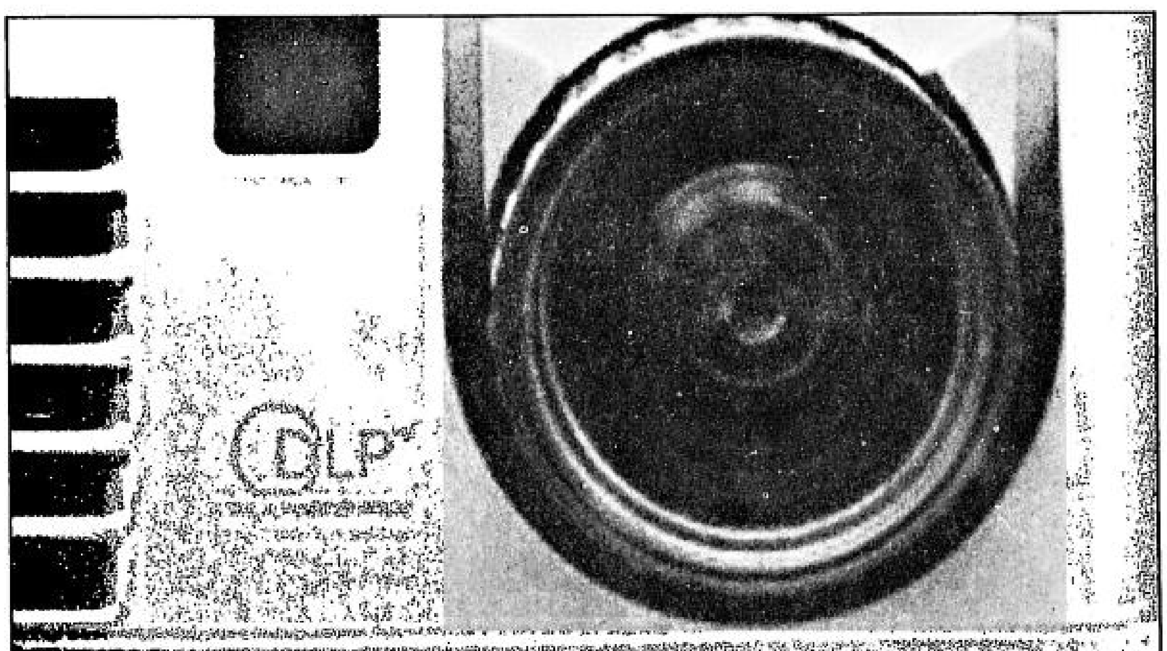

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Australia sends commandos to Iraq

SYDNEY—Australia sent a special hostage rescue team to Iraq as it tried to unravel the mystery surrounding claims that Islamic militants had kidnapped two Australian security guards, officials said Wednesday.

A deadline set by the alleged kidnappers to kill their captives if Australia did not announce plans to withdraw its troops from Iraq within 24 hours passed overnight with no news from the militants.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said 27 Australians known to be working in Iraq remained unaccounted for after 36 hours of frantic efforts by officials in Australia and Iraq to track down the expatriates.

"That number could change because that figure has grown quite a lot over the past 24 hours," Downer said.

Downer said a special defense and police team had already flown to Iraq as part of contingency planning in the event it was necessary to attempt a rescue of kidnapped Australians.

He declined to comment on media reports the team included up to 30 members of the elite Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) as well as federal police hostage negotiators.

But Downer said indications were growing that the hostage claim, made in leaflets distributed in a radical Islamic enclave in northern Iraq, could be a hoax.

He said Australian officials had contacted numerous security firms as well as officials from the United States and other countries active in Iraq and could find no reports of any foreigners being troubled in recent days.

"There's no report of anybody taken hostage very recently. At the moment we haven't been able to establish if this claim of taking two Australians hostage is bona fide," he said.

Officials also noted that the purported hostage takers had not released the names or any images of their victims to back up the kidnap claim.

A group calling itself the Horror Brigades of the Islamic Secret Army said in leaflets distributed late Monday that it had abducted two Australian and two "East Asian" security guards from a convoy traveling from Baghdad to the northern city of Mosul.

The group said it would execute the Australians if Prime Minister John Howard did not personally announce within 24 hours that he was ending Australia's involvement in Iraq.

Howard, one of US President George W Bush's closest allies, contributed 2,000 troops to last year's US-led invasion of Iraq and about 850 Australian soldiers remain in the region.

Australia's presence in Iraq has become a key issue in campaigning for Oct. 9 elections in which Howard is seeking a fourth term in office.

The leader of the main opposition Labor Party, Mark Latham, has vowed to pull Australia's troops from Iraq if he wins the election.

But both men on Tuesday ruled out making any concessions to the alleged hostage takers.

Latham complained on Wednesday that the government dispatched the rescue team without consulting with the Labor Party as required under so-called government "caretaker conventions" that apply in the run-up to elections.

"This is an outrageous breach of the caretaker conventions," Latham said.

"The truth is that if Labor is elected in three and a half weeks' time, we would be in charge of the operation.

"So isn't it in Australia's national interest to ensure the alternative government is consulted, given the information and involved from day one about this important decision?" he said.

Labor and Howard's conservative Liberal-National coalition are running neck-and-neck in opinion polls.

Most analysts say that if the hostage taking in Iraq proves true, coming on top of a deadly bombing by suspected Islamic radicals against Australia's embassy in Jakarta last week, it would deal a blow to Howard's standing. *AFP*

Megawati set to lose, polls show

JAKARTA—Indonesia's President Megawati Sukarnoputri is heading for a heavy defeat in next week's elections despite her coalition with the country's largest political party, two opinion polls showed Wednesday.

Former military general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has the support of 61 percent of voters, compared to 29 who say they will choose Megawati, according to a poll by the Washington-based International Foundation For Electoral Systems, or IFES.

"Megawati has a substantial backlog to catch up on. Her opponent's support has stabilized at 60 percent," said Alan Wall, IFES' Indonesian program manager. "It's a formidable challenge for Megawati or any politician to try to overcome."

The poll surveyed 2,000 respondents in face-to-face interviews across the country and had a margin of error of 2.2 percent.

A separate poll by the Indonesia Survey Institute gave Yudhoyono 57 percent and Megawati 31.5. The face-to-face survey polled 1,200 people and had a margin of error of 3 percent.

The Sept. 20 election follows first round polls in July, which Yudhoyono won but without an overall majority. Megawati came in second, setting up next week's face-off between the two.

After the first-round defeat, Megawati formed a coalition with the Golkar party of ex-dictator Suharto, which won the most votes in April parliamentary polls.

But many Golkar regional heads have refused to support Megawati. Moreover, most polls show that Indonesian voters do not intend to follow party lines when choosing their leader.

Most of the polling for both surveys took place before last week's blast at the Australian Embassy, but analysts have said the attack will have little affect on voters intentions. *AP*

HONORING CONFUCIUS
Students wearing traditional costumes perform during Seokjeon Memorial Rite at the Sung Kyun Kwan University in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday. Seokjeon is held at the civil temple to honor the virtues and follow the instruction of Confucius and the great sages. AP

Malaysia widens bird flu quarantine area

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia is considering placing the entire northeastern state of Kelantan under quarantine to prevent the spread of bird flu to the rest of the country as three new suspected cases were detected, officials said Wednesday.

The warning also followed a worrying discovery Tuesday that the bird flu virus has jumped outside a quarantine zone around the first village in Kelantan hit by the virus, which caused 28 human deaths in Asia this year.

The health ministry's disease control director Ramlee Rahmat said that three people, including an 8-year-old girl, who were hospitalized over the weekend have been cleared of the disease.

But three children—a 12-year-old boy, a 14-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl—from nearby villages were admitted for observation late Tuesday after developing cough and flu-like symptoms, he said.

"All three have a history of contact with the dead animals. We are isolating them as a precaution pending test results," he added.

Agriculture Minister Muhyiddin Yassin warned the entire state would be placed under quarantine if more bird flu cases emerged.

"We will have no choice but to enlarge the quarantine area if the number of new bird flu cases in Kelantan continues to increase," Muhyiddin was quoted as saying by the New Straits Times.

"This is to prevent the virus from spreading to other parts of the country and becoming a national outbreak."

Kelantan is already under intensive monitoring, with more than 200 officers conducting clinical checks at wet markets, bird sanctuaries and pet shops.

Muhyiddin earlier this week also suggested the use of the tough Internal Security Act, which allows indefinite detention without trial, against poultry smugglers to curb rampant smuggling across the border.

Officials say the disease was first brought into Malaysia by fighting cocks that had been exposed to the virus in Thailand and that the new outbreaks were caused by the continued smuggling of chicken meat.

Malaysia is seeking an urgent meeting with Thai authorities to discuss measures to combat the spread of the virus, including strengthening border security.

Thailand has been criticized by the World Health Organization for not doing enough to monitor birds capable of carrying the deadly avian flu virus following the kingdom's ninth human death last week. *AP*

Malaysian court dashes Anwar's political hopes

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia's highest court Wednesday crushed the immediate political ambitions of former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim when it refused to hear a new appeal against his conviction for corruption.

Anwar, 57, has already served his six-year sentence for corruption, which he says was part of a political conspiracy against him. But he will be barred from active politics until 2008 under regulations governing convicted criminals.

The charismatic and popular politician, who was once widely expected to become prime minister, was freed from prison earlier this month when the Federal Court overturned his separate conviction and nine-year sentence for sodomy.

But the same court said Wednesday it was not prepared to review its 2002 decision to reject his appeal on the corruption charge, which accused him of abusing his power to cover up allegations of sexual misconduct.

Judge Alauddin Mohamad Sheriff said the three judges were unanimous in finding that there was no merit in Anwar's application for a new appeal.

"By introducing new evidence it is an attempt to reopen the issue which has been conclusively settled. It is clear abuse of the court process. If this is allowed it will create chaos in our legal system," he said.

ANWAR

Anwar's political future has been the subject of intense debate since his release from prison. Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced Tuesday that the supreme council of the ruling party, the United Malays National Organization (Umno), had barred him from rejoining the party.

The decision ended speculation that Anwar would try to resume his political career within the party of which he was deputy president before being jailed in 1998. He has said he is determined to return to politics and press for reform of a system which he considers corrupt. *AFP*

French court acquits photogs in Princess Diana car crash

PARIS—A Paris appeals court on Tuesday upheld the acquittals of three photographers accused of invasion of privacy after they took pictures of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed at the scene of their deadly crash.

Jacques Langevin, Christian Martinez and Fabrice Chassery were first acquitted last November. Fayed's father, Egyptian-born billionaire Mohammed Al-Fayed, filed an appeal, which was rejected Tuesday by the Paris court. He said he planned to appeal again, to France's highest court.

"Photos like that are taken every day in every country in the world," said Langevin. "The judges were courageous. Justice has been done—for the moment."

His lawyer, Francois Stefanaggi, said the ruling showed that photographers were not responsible for the famous couple's deaths.

"At this stage in the procedure, we can consider that there is no longer any reason to lump together the unfortunate accident that cost the lives of Diana Spencer and Dodi Fayed and the photographers' pictures," he said.

The three men, whose photos were confiscated and not published, were among the swarm of photographers who pursued the car carrying Diana and her boyfriend across Paris on Aug. 31, 1997, and took photos after it slammed into the pillar of a traffic tunnel.

PRINCESS DIANA

The photos in question in the case showed Fayed and Diana leaving Paris' Ritz Hotel and after the crash.

Al-Fayed said he was "gravely disappointed" with the decision and planned to appeal to France's highest court.

"I have no doubt that the paparazzi sought to profit from the tragedy," Fayed said in Britain. "This is offensive to me and should be repugnant to everyone who cares about privacy, dignity and human decency."

At last year's trial, the court ruled that a crashed vehicle on a public highway is not a private area—a precedent-setting decision—and said that anyone in the street where Diana and Fayed crashed could have seen them. It also said the couple knew they would be photographed when leaving the Ritz. *AP*

Russian kids return to classes 2 weeks after crisis

BESLAN, Russia—Children returned to schools in this grief-stricken southern Russian town Wednesday for the first time since heavily armed militants seized more than 1,200 hostages at a school two weeks ago in a raid that shocked Russia and the world.

Students and teachers began the school day with a minute of silence, and officials said the town's seven schools would have a shortened day of classes. Children from School No. 1, where hundreds of terrified children and adults were held for nearly three days by heavily armed militants, have been sent on holidays or for treatment, and were not attending.

Their school building was almost completely destroyed, and survivors of the siege and their families have been granted stays at sanatoriums in the Black Sea resort of Sochi and other locations.

Footage on Russian television showed children dressed up in suits and bows being met at other schools by school officials, along with armed law enforcement officers dressed in camouflage. A full schedule of classes would begin Thursday, but teachers said many parents were keeping students away.

"I was scared during the terrorist act at School No. 1," said Kaitar Koloyev, a fourth-grade student from one of Beslan's other schools. "My friends were scared, too, but I tried to calm them, asking them to not be afraid and telling them that everything will be all right."

Classes had been scheduled to start in Beslan on Tuesday, but authorities decided to postpone the opening so that the military and police could continue searching school buildings for weapons or explosives.

"We have mixed feelings. We are afraid, but it's necessary to start school and we hope that things will turn for the better," said parent Mila Kiyanova.

"Our little Beslan is a very friendly town. We all know each other and in no way will terrorism break us," said Lyubov Vaniyeva, a teacher at School No. 6.

Soslan Sikoyev, acting regional interior minister for North Ossetia, said authorities were taking extra security measures, including daily armed patrols of schools. There was also a proposal to have regular inspections at schools and kindergartens.

At least 338 people were killed—nearly half of them children—when the three-day seizure ended Sept. 3 in explosions and gunfire. Authorities say all the hostage-takers were killed except one suspected attacker, who was detained.

Zarema Burgalova, a North Ossetian education official, told the ITAR-Tass news agency that many students still suffering from shock and stress were not expected to show up for classes. *AP*

INQBOX Question of the Week

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Death toll in Baghdad car bomb rises to 73

IRAQIS look at the site of a massive explosion outside a police station in Baghdad. AP

BAGHDAD—At least 73 people were killed in a Baghdad car bombing and in an ambush on police in Baquba, claimed by al-Qaida-linked militants, as fighting flared between US troops and insurgents in Ramadi.

Fifty people perished in Baghdad, 47 of them when a vehicle packed with explosives blew up outside the main police headquarters Tuesday.

More than 100 people were wounded in the bombing, the most lethal in the country for two months.

Shrapnel tore the crowded district, littering body parts everywhere and leaving pools of congealed blood on the pavement.

"More than 200 people were queuing outside the main gate. I came with six friends and now I'm alone. They've gone, all of them," said aspiring police recruit Nabeel Mohammed, slightly wounded in the blast.

Anguished relatives, seeking news of loved ones, frantically turned over ID cards or inspected dozens of pairs of shoes lined up on the roadside by police near the crater gouged in the ground by the blast.

Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib blamed the bombing on "Arab groups" as angry men cursed US President George W. Bush.

Further north in the Sunni Muslim hot spot of Baquba, 13 people died in an ambush, all but one of them policemen.

Late Tuesday, a series of loud explosions, thought to be from rockets, struck the interim government and US Embassy enclave in Baghdad, a US officer said.

The violence washing over Iraq has spiked in the past two weeks, amid a wave of attacks on Sunday also claimed by militants loyal to al-Qaida operative Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi and US assaults on Fallujah and Tall Afar.

Six coalition soldiers have been killed in Iraq over the past 24 hours—three Poles and three Americans—bringing the US death toll in Iraq to more than 1,012, according to the Pentagon.

The latest bombing came two days after bitter clashes between US troops and insurgents killed 13 people in the same Haifa Street area, considered a bastion of Saddam Hussein loyalists.

Using an Islamist website, the military wing of Zarqawi's Tawhid wal Jihad (Unity and Holy War) group purportedly claimed to have orchestrated what it called a suicide bombing in Baghdad and the Baquba gun attack.

"Heroes of the Tawhid wal Jihad are striking with an iron hand anyone who betrays religion and honor," said one of two statements, whose authenticity were impossible to confirm.

US forces have relentlessly pounded alleged Zarqawi safehouses in the Sunni Muslim stronghold of Fallujah, but on Tuesday lifted their siege on the northern town of Tall Afar, a suspected staging post for foreign fighters.

The assault on Tall Afar had triggered warnings from Washington's key ally Turkey that it would halt all cooperation in Iraq if the town continued to be a target.

Out west, 10 people were killed and 22 wounded in clashes between US troops and insurgents in the Sunni hotspot of Ramadi, where the sound of gunfire echoed from the city center, the health ministry said.

In the north, insurgents sabotaged a key pipeline, halting oil exports to Turkey, while a second act of sabotage slashed power in Kirkuk and Baiji.

In Vienna, Iraqi Oil Minister Thamir Ghadhban had said Iraq was producing more than 2.5 million barrels of oil per day and exporting two million.

A vital northern fuel export artery was attacked 60 km west of Kirkuk after dawn, once again halting exports to Turkey, an oil official said on condition of anonymity.

Separately the US military reported a fire along a pipeline near the oil refinery town of Baiji, southwest of Kirkuk, early Tuesday. The attack forced the Baiji power plant to shut down, affecting power in both Baiji and Kirkuk.

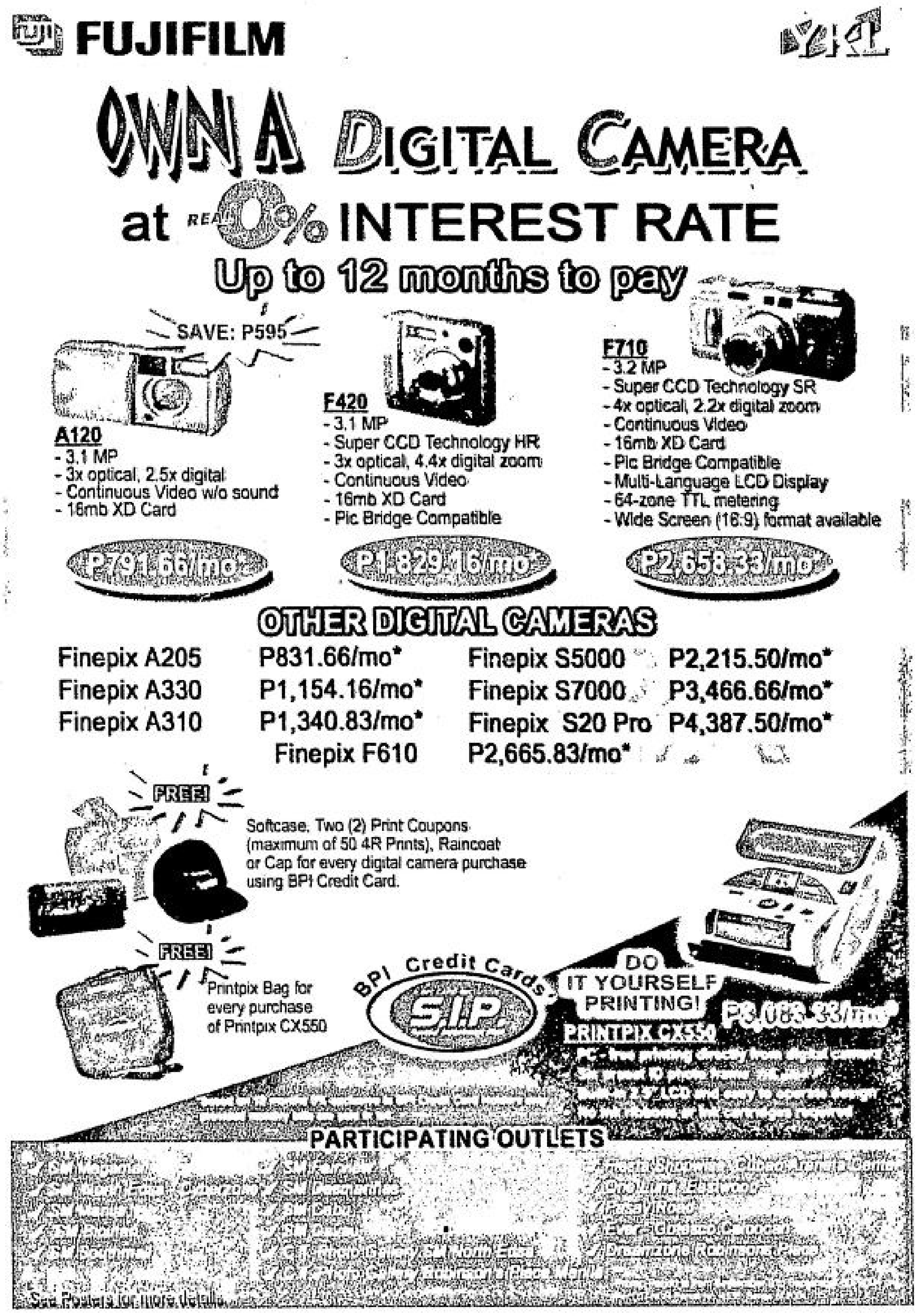
On a European tour to drum up support for his country, President Ghazi al-Yawar pressed Nato and the EU to do more to help stabilize his war-ravaged country ahead of elections which he hopes can be held in January.

US officials said the United States is to shift more than $3 billion in aid to Iraq from reconstruction programs to largely beefing up security.

But Iraq's seemingly never-ending foreign hostage crisis continued apace, as militants claimed the two separate kidnappings of a Jordanian and two Turkish truck drivers.

A group calling itself "Squads of Unification Lions" abducted the Jordanian and threatened to kill him unless his employer pulls out of Iraq within 48 hours, in a video aired on Al-Jazeera television.

For its part, Canberra has vowed never to bow to terrorists amid claims that Iraqi militants have kidnapped two Australians and will execute them unless it withdraws its troops from Iraq. *AFP*



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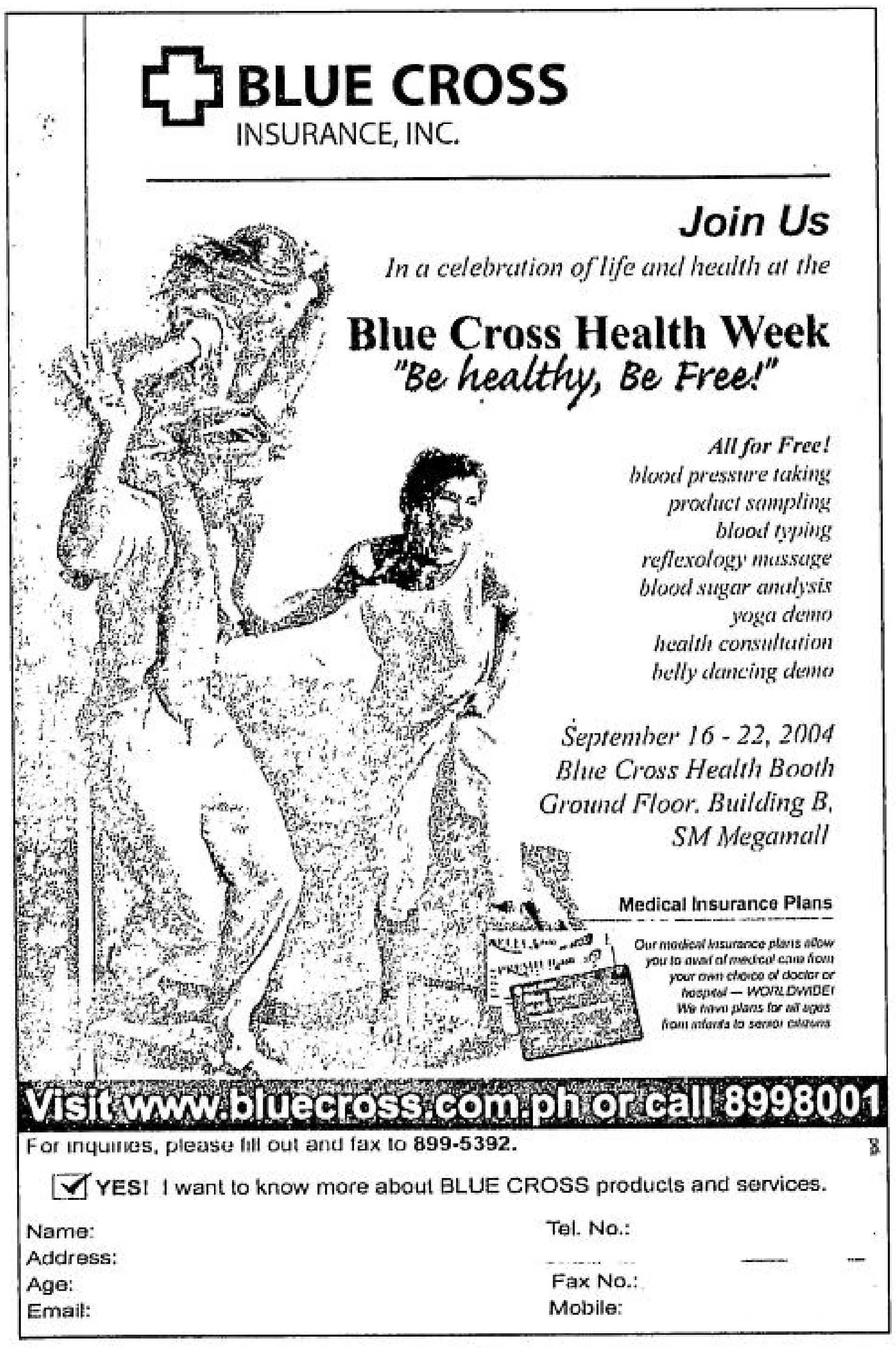

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Formula for failure

EDITORIAL

SHE isn't abandoning a sinking ship, National Treasurer Mina Figueroa says. And she isn't leaving due to policy differences over how to deal with the huge government deficit. Rather it is because she needs to close the "personal deficit" that developed after she left her job in a large commercial bank and joined the government three years ago. "My resignation is not because of anything else but only because I have to think of my own finances," she told reporters.

"Maybe she wants to transfer to a GOCC," suggested Sen, Manuel Villar, chair of Senate committee on finance which had just been apprised about the multimillion-peso yearly compensations of top executives in government corporations, eliciting laughter from the audience.

That remark was neither cute, nice nor funny. It was uncouth, unkind and unfair. In case Villar hasn't noticed, the government bureaucracy doesn't pay its officials and employees very well, otherwise why would nurses at the Philippine General Hospital shave their heads and march in the streets to demand a salary increase? The President herself earns only P57,750 a month. Figueroa as the national treasurer gets a monthly salary of P28,875, a fraction of what she used to earn in the private sector. What's wrong with trying to cut one's losses or to earn more through hard and honest work?

It is not only the teachers who are overworked and underpaid; most government employees are. For instance, a chief of division in a national government office gets a salary of about P20,000 monthly, and yet he is required to have a post-graduate degree. At the very least, Figueroa deserves to be praised for her candor in admitting she doesn't wish to continue to make-do with what the government pays her and again calling the nation's attention to the ridiculously low salaries government employees and officials get.

What makes this situation rankle even more is that there is no such thing as equality in misery among those who work for the government. The list of 100 highest paid GOCC executives amply demonstrates the gross disparity in compensation between those who serve in the government and those who work for government corporations. Heading the list submitted to Villar's committee are Maria Livia de Leon, chair of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office who got P9.9 million in salaries and allowances in 2001, and former Leyte Rep. Sergio A.F. Apostol, who received P9.2 million in 2002 as chair and president of the Philippine National Oil Company's Energy Development Corp. And to think that Apostol, for example, probably knows much more about English diction and elocution than oil exploration and power generation.

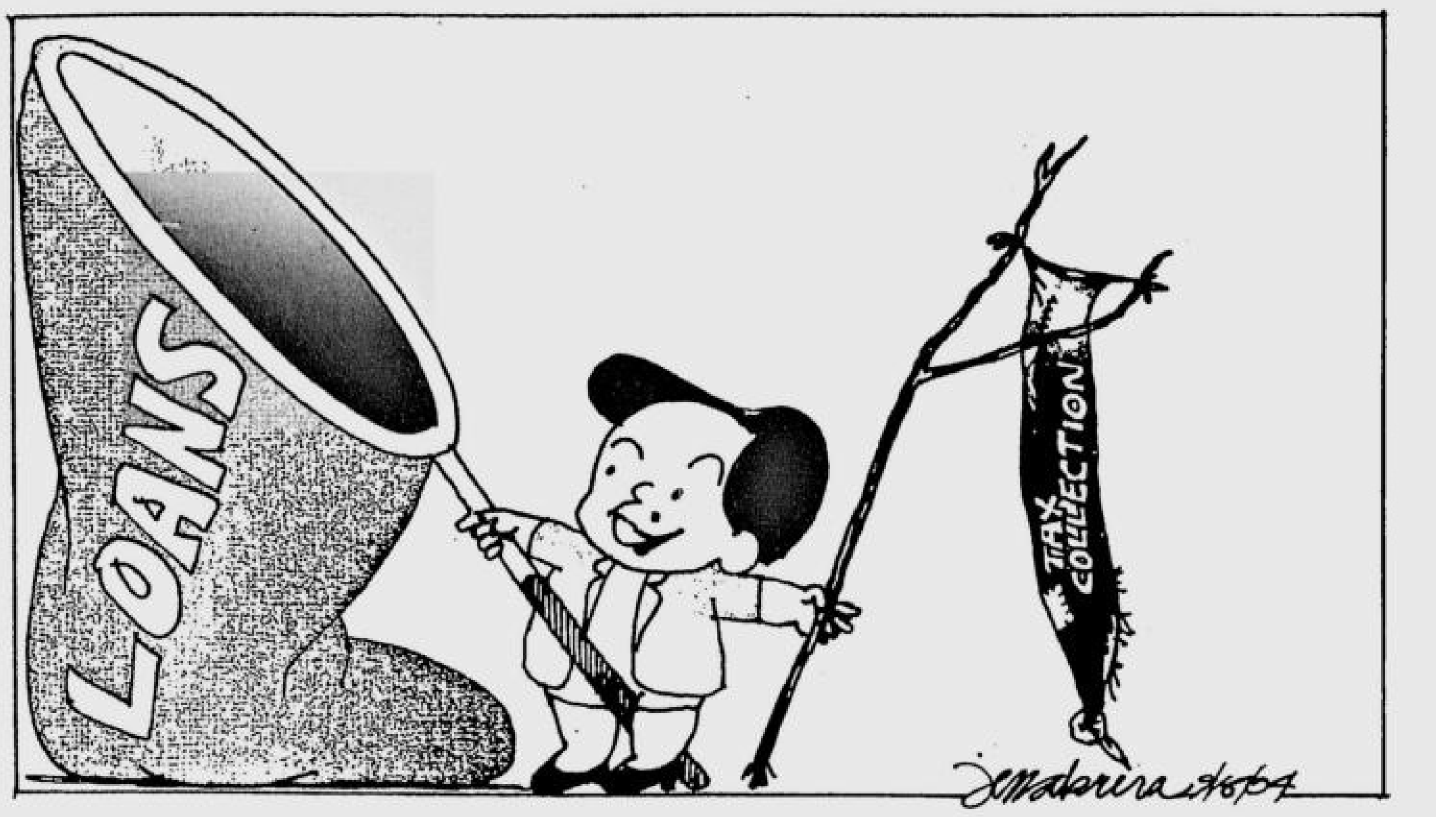
It is not just at the very top that people working for GOCCs are more equal than others in government. For instance, some members of the legal staff of the Government Service Insurance System earn much more than the chief justice of the Supreme Court.

It is difficult to imagine a more potent formula for corporate failure than making politics the basis for top appointments and allowing people, with little to lose, write their own pay checks. So it is hardly surprising that most GOCCs have been losing heavily and now government is left not only holding an empty bag but assuming their debts amounting to more than P2 trillion.

Malacañang certainly is largely to blame for this. It has become standard practice for President Macapagal-Arroyo to parcel out positions as rewards among her loyal political lieutenants, regardless of their qualifications. And she doesn't even have the will or the heart to enforce the rules she herself has set, like that one limiting the compensation of presidential appointees to not more than twice her own salary.

But Congress cannot profess innocence either. Its fingerprints are there in the charter of every government corporation. Their charters exempt government corporations from following the Salary Standardization Law and allow them to set the compensation packages for their officials and employees. The result is that every profitable corporation distributes as much of its earnings as it can among its officials and employees, while those that find themselves in the red ask the government to subsidize its operations and pay for their losses.

Congress is hardly a model of prudent spending. For serving in the Senate Electoral Tribunal, three justices earned P1.5 million each in a year. If the justices earned that much, could the senators who served in the same body have settled for less? Then there is their slice from the pork barrel. Could this be lower than the salary of the highest paid GOCC official?



Tyranny of the urgent

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

LOLOY, my barber, TV anchor David Celdran, and most everyone in this town talk of the "crisis." If unresolved, runaway debts and revenue leakages could send the country skidding into bankruptcy, 11 University of the Philippines professors had warned earlier.

"There cannot be another crisis next week," then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger joked. "My schedule is already full."

Kissinger's wisecrack underscores that emergencies rarely erupt in isolation. Like chicken pox, they bust out all over.

Budget red ink is matched by "ecological deficits," from ravaged forests to depleted fishing grounds. Obsolete infrastructure crumbles under growing numbers of indigents. Modern diseases, from obesity to hypertension surge, while old diseases, like TB, measles, diarrhea, etc., persist.

"We must tackle simultaneously problems the western world addressed sequentially," the Asian Development Bank warns. "Emerging Asia will not be afforded this luxury."

Was it historian Barbara Tuchman who wrote about "tyranny of the urgent"? The capacity to govern, she said, is sapped by interlocking crises. Overwhelmed by today's demands, few can plan for tomorrow.

Yet, foresight is the nub of statesmanship. The future "comes soon enough," Albert Einstein complained.

Illusions of abundance aggravate this spiral of emergencies. Today, we're running short of just about everything: water, arable land, power. The era of copious resources is over. We've stumbled into a time of scarcities. But mindsets haven't caught up with reality.

Our ravaging of mangroves illustrates this. "Among major marine ecosystems, it is mangroves that suffered the earliest and greatest degradation," notes a new study by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center.

Mangroves are woven into our landscapes and history. They provide food, timber, medicine, fish havens and buffers against the 20 to 30 typhoons that yearly whiplash the country.

The name "Maynilad" comes from *nilad* (*scyphiphora hydrophyllacea*). This species thrived along Manila Bay and the Pasig River well into the early 1900s. As many as 42 species could be found in just one spot. That diversity resonates in our maps: Bakhaw in Jaro Iloilo, Canipaan River in Palawan, Piapi Beach in Dumaguete or Lipatan in Surigao.

"Around 30 percent of the world's remaining mangrove occurs in Southeast Asia," the United Nation's Environment Programme notes in: "Mangroves In the South China Sea." "But the annual rate of loss is 55 percent than the world average…[This] loss of biological diversity must be a matter of global concern."

Population growth, salt ponds, farms, roads, markets—even land grabbers who blanket areas with tax declarations—sliced Philippine mangroves to less than a fifth in just a century.

In 1900, the Philippines had 500,000 hectares of mangroves. Today, only 109,000 hectares remain, the Food and Agriculture Organization estimates. Our rate of loss is faster than Thailand and Malaysia, but slower than Vietnam.

Aklan's shoreline, specially along the Naisud River's mouth, in Ibajay, provides stark damage portraits. Stripped of mangroves, it has crumbled back 40 meters in the last three decades.

Conversion into pond aquaculture is a major reason for the decline, say UNEP and Seafdec.

"The greatest loss stems from large-scale development of milkfish (bangus) fishponds," note Seafdec scientists Jurgenne Primavera, Resurrecion Sadaba, Ma. Junemie Labata and Jon Altamirano. Half of 279,000 hectares lost between 1931 and 1988 stemmed from conversion into aquaculture ponds.

"Success stories" of reforesting in Binulasan, Infanta of Quezon Province as well as Bais and Sagay in Negros Occidental have been documented. Overall, there is decay. But there's also hope.

Mangroves resemble debts. There are limits to demands that a biological system or revenues can meet. Without replenishment, those hazy thresholds can be breached only by "overdrawing." Demands are met then only by consuming the resource itself.

Thresholds are ill-defined, the Worldwatch Institute notes. But it is clear that each downward step reinforces the next. Downward spirals gather momentum with every failure to reverse course.

"We face a unique democratic choice." Garcia Alan Perez wailed when IOUs threatened Peru with collapse. "It's either democracy or debt."

In previous crises, reaction came in three stages, beginning with denial. The President scrapped her "pre-election policy of finessing" the crisis, the INQUIRER's Randy David noted in his column, "Crisis psychology." This aborted denials and attention focused on solutions.

In Stage Two, "bearers of bad news" are shot. But the press spotted the reckless debt splurges by government corporations well after the crisis erupted. Did we flub our jobs as one of society's "early warning systems"?

Should tardy messengers be "whipped with wire and stewed in brine"? Cleopatra demanded as much for the bearer of news on Anthony's marriage. But that's another column.

Reforms can be subverted. Did Agusan del Sur buy seven new service vehicles worth P6.7 million on Sept. 14, despite a ban on such purchases?

If reforms falter, then today's revenue and debt crisis could set off an Argentina style meltdown. That's when Stage Three kicks in. You then call in the cops. The fiesta is over.

* * *

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Giant steps

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S a play that's taken the United Kingdom and the United States by storm. It's called "Guantanamo: Honour-Bound To Defend Freedom." It was written by Victoria Brittain and Gillian Slovo, based on the accounts of 11 British inmates of Guantanamo Detention Center in Cuba. The 11 are Muslims, picked up in various parts of the world and detained without charges, without evidence and for most of them, without hope of being released.

They are among 600 prisoners, all Muslims, being held in Guantanamo. The play tells of the terror wreaked upon the suspects, which is the biggest secret that lies at the heart of America today. It is also its "biggest issue of injustice," as Brittain puts it. She adds: "The outrage of Guantanamo is so overwhelming that when people actually began to hear about it they couldn't believe it."

"There is no law here," one of the jailers says in the play. "It doesn't apply." When the play opened in the United States recently, several newspapers asked if the same question might not apply to America itself today.

"Guantanamo" was one of the things Mary Ann Wright mentioned last Monday when she breezed into Manila and spoke before a group of Americans living in this country, who are of course also overseas voters. She was here to campaign for John Kerry, or more specifically to campaign against George W. Bush. Wright may be a familiar name to some Filipinos. She was a spark of light amid the near-total darkness in the days prior to the US invasion of Iraq.

A career diplomat for 15 years, Wright resigned her post in March 2003 over differences with the US government's policies toward the world. This was a time when Bush had terrorized his country enough to coerce bipartisan support for his war and stifle nearly all dissent in his country. Wright had served in several hardship posts, or diplomatic flashpoints, over the last decade and a half: Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Somalia, Grenada and Nicaragua. In 1997, she received the State Department's Award for Heroism for her role in evacuating 2,500 persons during the civil war in Sierra Leone. Before that she served in the US Army for 26 years, earning the rank of colonel.

Her letter to Colin Powell on March 19, 2003 set out her reasons for resigning. "This is the only time in my many years serving America that I have felt I cannot represent the policies of an administration of the US. I disagree with the administration's policies on Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, North Korea, and the curtailment of civil liberties in the US." She amplified the last in this wise: "Solitary confinement without access to legal counsel cuts at the heart of the legal foundations upon which our country stands. Additionally, I believe the administration's secrecy in the judicial process has created an atmosphere of fear to speak out against the gutting or protections on which America was built and the protections we encourage other countries to provide to their citizens."

Guantanamo stands first among those that cut at the heart of the legal foundations of America—no, more than legal, the moral foundations of that country. As Wright says, it took the United Kingdom two years of dogged legal effort to get three of its nationals released. Their stories became the basis of the play "Guantanamo." Soon after the three were repatriated to the United Kingdom, they were released for lack of evidence. The United Kingdom, said Wright, was America's chief ally in its invasion of Iraq. "Can you imagine what other countries would have to go through to get their nationals out of that prison?"

She can understand, Wright says, why Bush bitterly opposes the International Criminal Court. (The United States is not a signatory to it, even while regaling the world with the trial of Saddam Hussein.) "Some of what the US government has done easily qualify as war crimes."

Two things Wright worries about in particular as a result of the terrorism Bush is wreaking upon the world and his own country: The first is that it will fan terrorism and encourage America's enemies to do to American nationals what America is doing to its detainees in Guantanamo. "If I were a soldier today stationed abroad, I'd be very scared."

The second is that it isn't just fomenting ill-will against Americans abroad, it is subverting America's moral standing completely. Unfortunately, she says, most Americans do not realize this. "Unlike you," she said, the American public does not get to see Al Jazeera or be exposed to other points of view." (I did not get the chance to say we do not get to see Al Jazeera either, and that more than the Americans, Filipinos subscribe to the viewpoint of Fox Network.) It's time the soiling of the American image abroad stopped, she said. That was why she was supporting Kerry.

Well, I myself do not share her optimism about the great changes Kerry will work for if he wins the elections. Bill Clinton, a Democrat, was president for eight years and he implemented the embargo on Iraq, which led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. And he was much intimidated by the US military. But I am truly glad there are people, Wright at the forefront of them, who are fighting the real war against terrorism, which is not just to be found in the deserts of Afghanistan but in the redoubts of Washington. The changes in American policy may prove far slower in a Kerry government than Wright supposes (alongside America's libertarian traditions, which have stood for 200 years, are its expansionist drives, which have been advanced and defended not least by its Hearsts and Foxes), but right now anyone or anything other than Bush should represent a vast improvement in and from America.

No, more than a vast improvement, a giant step for humankind.

Test case

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST week's luncheon at the residence of Speaker Jose de Venecia in Dasmariñas Village drew an impressive assemblage of women power in this country. Led by Gina de Venecia, president of the Congressional Spouses Foundation, and Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Juliano Soliman, the gathering included women leaders from Congress (Representatives Neneng Nicolas, Etta Rosales, Risa Hontiveros-Baranquel and Belma Cabilao), the media, civil society, business and other sectors. The discussion focused on RA 9262, the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 (Anti-VAWCA), passed by Congress on March 27, 2004. The test case of Melissa Mercado-Martel challenged its implementation for the first time in a high-profile fashion.

* * *

Martel, daughter of movie stars Luis Gonzalez and Vina Concepcion, was allegedly shot by her husband, Roby Martel, in August 2003. As she lay badly wounded in the ICU, her lawyers filed a petition for a temporary protection order the next day. Women activists at the luncheon noted that in previous times the court may not have acted that fast with the temporary protection order, but thanks to RA 9262, abused women may seek such immediate relief. Under the law, the judge must issue the order within 24 hours.

The case of frustrated parricide Melissa filed against her husband was recently dismissed by the prosecutors (the merit or lack of merit of her complaint and its dismissal by the prosecutor are still the subject of controversy). But the fact remains that RA 9262 has given battered women and children a better fighting chance against their assailants.

* * *

As Justice Harriet Demetriou, who used to be a family court judge, noted, under RA 9262, the police can no longer claim that an act of violence against a wife by her husband is merely a "domestic problem" between them. Neither can they desist from rescuing a wife being beaten up for fear of being accused of "violation of domicile." Before RA 9262, noted Demetriou, women were just subject to charity when they were battered physically, psychologically or economically, but now, when a wife calls, the police, the NBI or even the barangay officials cannot ignore her.

De Venecia, addressing the gathering, promised to see to it that the full force of RA 9262 will be implemented in the test case that's Melissa's. But it must be acknowledged that this milestone of a law, authored by women lawmakers, was passed by a Congress dominated by male legislators. The women get the benefits, but the men lawmakers must share the credit for passing it.

* * *

The senators have zeroed in on government-owned and -controlled corporations for various reasons. Some obviously are seeking to divert public attention from the clamor for members of Congress to give up their pork barrel. But that's fine. Let it all hang out and let the truth about the GOCCs surface. Some of them have long been draining the public coffers through gross mismanagement; others have been good only at incurring tremendous debts. In other cases, the rate of return on investment has been so ridiculously small it would have been better to just keep the capital in the bank.

* * *

My only apprehension with the present preoccupation with GOCCs is that it might divert the Senate from the urgent task of helping the government address the budget deficit. The GOCCs may be castigated and disciplined and the pork barrel may be abolished, but, ultimately, as economists have stressed, nothing will substitute for the passage of the needed tax measures. For instance, Sen. Joker Arroyo says no way will the Senate pass those tax measures. But what's the Senate's solution to closing the budget gap and solving the fiscal crisis?

* * *

Sometimes we Filipinos take a long time to realize the good we have done. For instance, few realize that Congress passed the e-Procurement Act a year and a half ago which should make the process of procurement of government supplies and equipment more transparent and competitive, thus possibly putting an end to price collusion and contract-rigging. But few are aware that, as De Venecia noted recently, the World Bank has praised the e-Procurement Act as "a major example of an anti-corruption legislation." RP is oftentimes mentioned among the countries with a record of corruption, but it's also one of the few nations that have enacted a law precisely to reform the procurement system.

* * *

On the program Cecile Alvarez and I co-host every Sunday evening, we invited Armando and Lynda Bartolome, whose GMB Franchise Developers packages franchises for firms and coaches prospective investors, especially OFWs, on what investments to make. The Bartolomes pointed out that a number of Philippine SMEs are making waves abroad, among them, Sari-Sari Boutique which has invaded California. Bench and Penshoppe are now also found in China. Within the year, apparel brands like Maldita and Gingersnaps will also open abroad. The champ is still Jollibee which has some 80 branches overseas.

On the other hand, Armando said, the provincial entrepreneurs are doing just fine with their franchises. Among them are Julie's Bakeshop, with 380 stores nationwide; La Paz Batchoy (started in 1945 by a businessman in Iloilo and revived by his son) with 35 branches in various parts of the country; Bacolod Inasal; and Pure Gelato, an ice cream cart franchise with 45 branches. There's also the inspiring story of a 19-year-old who eight years ago set up hotel, photo shop, dry-cleaning and water-station businesses. Now he has added a restaurant in Iloilo that uses up to 3,000 chickens a day.

GMB Franchise Developers Inc. can be reached at 532-8386 and 535-0106.

1,347 unfound

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THEY went missing and have not been found until today. They are the 1,347 victims of "enforced disappearance" from 1971 to 2003. They are the so-called *desaparecidos* (disappeared) who walked into the darkness and were never seen again.

Sept. 21 is upon us again. It will rake up painful memories and open wide the wounds that never quite heal. It is a time to pause to see where we have healed and where still we bleed. Justice still eludes the countless who had suffered, while those who caused the suffering walk with their heads high.

Thirty-two years ago on Sept. 21, 1972, when President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, many people feared for their lives and their loved ones. But that day, they could not have imagined the greater horror, the sorrow, the darkness that would later visit countless lives.

Although some families already had a foretaste of what was to come the year before (the first case of disappearance happened in 1971), they had no inkling of what still lay ahead. The Reign of Terror would later cut a wide bloody swath across the land and for 14 years the dictatorship would hold the nation in its tight grip.

Next week, on Sept. 22, at 10 a.m., the "Bantayog ng mga Desaparecido" will be unveiled at the Redemptorist Church grounds in Baclaran. The Bantayog includes the refurbished Flame of Courage Monument created by artist Lito Mondejar in 1994 and the new 21 granite slabs on which the names of the 1,347 victims are etched. The Bantayog was designed by painter-sculptor Bessie Rifareal who began work in 2003.

This place is dedicated to those who offered their lives for the country and whose ideals remain an inspiration for many who work for a just and free society. It is also dedicated to the families who carry the burden of loss and continue to bravely face the future while continuing to pick up the shards of their lives.

The Flame of Courage Monument depicts the figure of a woman holding a lighted torch. She is in search of someone. With her is a little child holding a picture of the one they are looking for. The life-size monument symbolizes struggle and undying hope.

Come, pray and remember in this hallowed place. Come, pray and make a vow never to let unbridled tyranny destroy lives again.

Behind this endeavor is the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND). FIND has been behind projects helping the families in their search for the missing and for justice as well.

FIND continues to document cases of disappearances. Yes, abductions and summary killings continue to this day. The latest case happened in 2003. FIND documents "state perpetuated" cases only. Cases that were, at first, thought to be the handiwork of the military and later proven to have been part of the communist "purge" or wrongful execution of communist militants by their own comrades have been removed from the list. A FIND staffer, however, said that FIND continues to assist the families of the victims of these executions because they have become part of the FIND family. They now have their own memorial at the University of the Philippines' sunken garden.

Just a little footnote. I've always had a problem with what the acronym FIND stands for. FIND stands for Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance. How can one be a victim of one's own disappearance, be it voluntary or involuntary? Disappearance is the result, not the cause. Like there is no such thing as a victim of death. One is a victim of abduction, torture, oppression, etc. but not of disappearance or death.

"Families of the disappeared victims of tyranny" (or whatever) is more precise although it would not fit the four-letter acronym. Here the word "disappeared" is a noun (not a verb) and is the English translation of the Spanish *desaparecido* or the missing. *Desaparecido* was commonly used in Latin America where military dictators ruled with impunity.

Sorry *ha*, but that's been bothering me for years. What's in a name? A lot.

One of the known victims of military abduction is Fr. Rudy Romano, a Redemptorist priest who disappeared in 1985 in Cebu where he was assigned at that time. The Redemptorists' hospitality to the memorial for the disappeared partly stems from the fact that one of their own has been missing for almost 20 years. The search for Father Romano was long and arduous. It sparked international interest and led to the highest court of the land. And just like in any search, it had its share of rumors, bum steers, hoaxes and hearsay. The details are in the biography "Romano of the Philippines" written by Lilette Chan-Santos.

At a small media dinner I attended some years ago, a military general said he believed Father Romano was abducted "by the PC."

Johannes Barroso was arrested in 1975 together with Eugenio Flores and Nenita Luneta in Cabanatuan City by members of the 5th Constabulary Security Unit of the Philippine Constabulary and brought to the PC headquarters in the city. Barroso would later disappear without a trace. The military denied having arrested him.

And there is 20-year-old UP-Los Baños student Gerardo Faustino who was arrested in Makati by a military intelligence group in 1977. There is Prudencio Bati-on of Sta. Cruz, Manila who disappeared on March 1, 1999. By the way, the INQUIRER editor in chief's first cousin, Leticia Pascual, is also among the disappeared.

The last line of the dedication at the Bantayog reads: "*Para sa ating lahat na nagpapatuloy ng laban na sinimulan ng mga desaparecido para sa katarungan, kalayaan at pagkakapantay-pantay.*"

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Senior moment

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

HAD I known that Rep. Tony Diaz was the congressman famed for lavish dining in a Japanese restaurant, I'd have asked him to take me out for a meal—if only for the guilty pleasure of dining at the public's expense. Anyway, at 77, he's entitled to a senior citizen discount, courtesy of a congressional enactment.

Ten minutes into Tina Monzon Palma's "Talkback" program on ANC, Diaz made it clear that his "resignation" was really something between a tantrum and a bluff. And while his tantrum certainly got him attention, he wasn't willing for anyone to call his bluff. He then announced (after some hemming and hawing) that he was withdrawing his resignation.

Left with no real news to discuss, the show drifted along, touching on various subjects such as the pork barrel. All attempts at idealism were nipped in the bud by Diaz's pragmatic responses to every question. His chief response being, "How else are we going to get elected?"

How, indeed. What I did find interesting was one point Diaz raised—the question of seniority.

Seniority is a concept anyone who works is familiar with. The longer you are in an organization—and presumably the greater the experience you derive from your work—the greater your chances are to earn perks and promotions. The concept of seniority is cherished by people in the private and public sectors. Ideally, seniority should never override talent, but more often than not, in the real world, seniority trumps everything else. That is why in both private corporations and the civil service, you have people who reach high positions by being survivors. We happen to hear of many such cases in the civil service: people rise to the top and make a mess of things at the public's expense; but such cases happen pretty often, too in many private firms.

In legislatures, such as ours, seniority is very important. While we haven't reached the level of formality of the United States Congress, where committee chairmen have been there so long that little brass nameplates are screwed into conference tables to mark their places and corresponding pecking order, the idea of seniority as a means of determining committee chairmanships is as old as our legislative system. This means that our politicians are heirs to a system of seniority that dates back to 1907.

The power and influence of a member of Congress is determined by the committee chairmanships he or she holds at a given time.

Sen. Jovito Salonga, in recreating the Philippine Senate after its period of abolition from 1972-1986, simplified matters by creating twice as many committees as there are senators, assuring each senator at least one, if not two, committees to chair.

In the House, there simply aren't enough committees to go around. But even if there were 200 plus committees in the House, it wouldn't be enough to guarantee each congressman a chairmanship.

The Senate today suffers from the impatience of many first term senators, all of whom want to head the most powerful and prestigious committees. If in the supposedly wiser and more genteel Senate this sort of egotistical scrambling happens, what more in the House?

This, to my mind, is precisely the reason why Diaz threw that hissy fit of his. He complained during the show, that he was offered the chairmanship of a committee that had something to do with Mount Pinatubo. He was offered nothing else, and he found the Pinatubo committee useless and beneath his standing as a longtime member of the House.

The House leadership, according to Diaz, set aside the congressionally cherished principle of seniority: or to be precise, it has come up with a new system of calculating seniority. In the old days, seniority in Congress was determined by the number of terms one has held, continuously or not. Today, he said, seniority is calculated according to the term one holds within the three-term limit imposed by the Constitution.

Say, you were elected in 2001. During your first term, you'd be ranked a neophyte, entitled, at most, to a vice-chairmanship of a committee. Only during your subsequent and then third (and final) term would you be considered senior enough to merit a chairmanship of a committee.

Diaz asserts this is unfair to congressmen like him. In Diaz's case, he served a term in the House from 1969-1972; sat in the Batasan during martial law, and was elected to three terms starting 1987. Because of the Constitution, he had to sit out a term from 2001-04, and then came back. His seniority, he feels, should be calculated from 1969, his first year in the House, which would make him very, very senior indeed—thus explaining his desire to be deputy speaker, among other things.

The incumbent Speaker says otherwise. My impression is that the new way of calculating seniority is indeed a De Venecia innovation. I recall that the first Congress under the prevailing Constitution had veteran representatives like Cornelio Villareal of Capiz (who first joined the legislature during the Commonwealth) holding powerful (and lucrative) chairmanships under Speaker Ramon Mitra. Diaz is having a hard time adjusting to a more ruthless and, in a sense, impatient congressional system. Being a traditional politician, he is polite enough not to actually criticize his peers. Although when I suggested that despite the foreign academic degrees of his younger peers, they lack practical knowledge, he replied with a hearty "Yes!" And he nodded emphatically when I asked him if, in his opinion, his younger (and more powerful) colleagues lack the virtue of patience.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Beyond persuasion

YOUNG BLOOD

Ryan Fenix

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I LOOK out my office window here in Tondo, and I see a college student's shoulder bag being snatched by a dark-skinned young boy. The kid, maybe 16 or so, is running for dear life, as barangay tanod, alerted by the student's screams, give chase. Soon he is caught and gets a slap in the face, courtesy of the victim. Welcome to a day in the life of someone living in Tondo.

Scenes like this are very common now. We read about them, or see them being played up on television, and take them for granted.

However, such things bring out certain feelings in me, feelings of helplessness, of despair, of outrage even. And most of all, feelings of hopelessness and resignation.

This is the reason I have this burning desire to leave the Philippines for good. I have this sense that it is utterly useless and hopeless to stay. Money is hard to come by and it is not raining opportunities here. And if with some luck or lots of perseverance, one earns millions, how sure is he that he will not be the next victim of robbers, holdup gangs or kidnapping syndicates?

No one walks or drives in the streets without looking over his shoulders in apprehension or fear. Not the poor, and most certainly not the middle class or the rich. And the most depressing part is, things are not going to improve. Not in our lifetime anyway.

Those who say there is still hope here are politicians who have either won public office (and have already accumulated wealth and bodyguards) or plan to run for office (hoping to accumulate wealth and bodyguards).

My girlfriend says, "As long as *masipag ka dito sa Pilipinas, di ka magugutom.*" I tend to agree. But even if you don't go hungry, will you ever move beyond an "*isang kahig isang tuka*" existence? And if by chance, you do prosper, will there be enough security guards to guard you and your family? Will the walls be high enough to keep the criminals away? Will your bed be soft enough for you to sleep even as you worry about the safety of family and friends?

Whether we like it or not, the feeling shared by businessmen and the youth is one of hopelessness. Either you live with it, or you leave. But getting out is an option only for a select few. And the few who had the opportunity have already done so. What does that make of our country, a land of rejects and of people who want to leave but cannot?

Do we really have to live with corrupt officials, terrible roads, floods, pollution, crime and violence and endless rallies by so-called militant groups?

To those who have the opportunity to leave, I say, grab it and to hell with this country. That is where it is headed for anyway.

In one TV interview, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. was asked what his advice was for the young people of today. He said: "The young people must stay here in the Philippines, and help us rebuild. *E paano kong aalis kayong lahat, kaming matatanda na lang ang maiiwan dito. Kayo ang pag-asa ng bayan* (If your leave, only the old folks will be left behind. You are our country's hope)."

Good luck, senator. Go convince the others. You can't convince me anymore.

Ryan Fenix, 26, does not look out his office window in Tondo anymore.

Cursed

Paolo L. Azurin

I HAVE made it. I am now in the United States.

Most Filipinos would love to be in my place. I know that our generation has been the most willing to emigrate. Our seemingly stagnant society leaves much to be desired. The real incomes of Filipinos have barely breached the levels in the 1980s. Job creation is slow. There is overcrowding, with more and more people being born into poverty every year. Worst of all, people do not follow laws. It seems that nothing good can ever happen to the Philippines.

It is probably well that I have left the people who have hurt me in so many ways. I have left the people who held up my younger brother with a knife. I have left the people who murdered my *ninang* for the paltry sum of P80,000. And I have left the people who choose to be led by corrupt officials who have no business running a country.

I am lucky. I have an excellent chance of making it in the United States. I graduated from the University of the Philippines and I am entering the MBA program in the University of Illinois. After graduation, I can expect a starting salary of about $80,000 annually, plus the signing bonuses and other perks. In two years, I can be made.

But the United States is not where home is. I came to America to learn and I plan to return home. I think of myself as following in the footsteps of a long line of Filipinos who have gone back. Many of the *ilustrados, pensionados* and foundation fellows of earlier years have returned home and I have every intention of joining their ranks.

In an age when pragmatism offers the best option for survival, I am going against the tide to try to rekindle the long lost ideal of nationalism. Many people have given up their lives to pursue the freedom that still eludes us Filipinos.

It has been said that before Jose Rizal was shot in Bagumbayan, his heartbeat was normal. He was not afraid. He was happy to give his life to a society that he himself said was afflicted with a social cancer. It made him happier to be shot than to practice medicine and have a lucrative career.

I guess I am just like everyone else. I am looking for happiness, too. I know that $80,000 can buy a certain degree of happiness, but that kind of utility is ultimately futile. The thing that would make me happiest is taking part in the never-ending job of nation building. Joy is ultimately found in love, a love for the people who seem to hate their own kind and who seem to hate me.

No matter how much Filipinos have hurt me, I know that I will go back, driven by a seemingly mythical hope that things can be better. It may not even come in my lifetime, it is just a blind hope that I can start something that will ultimately bear fruit. This belief is my curse, and my blessing. And I wish many others are as cursed as I am.

I flew to Chicago a few days ago and my classes start next week. Now I am beginning my journey home.

Paolo Azurin, 24, used to teach economics and sociology at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

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LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A question of using sex in the proper context

THE DECISION of SM to ban R-18 movies in all its movie houses is commendable, and I would like to offer my congratulations to the owners and management of SM.

The benefits of this decision are immeasurable; in converse proportion, the damage that sex in the media wreaks is irreparable. Sex has a specific niche in our lives, but it should be used in the proper context. Initiating a child into sex early in his/her life shortens a child's period of carefree innocence. It is like hurrying up his/her maturity. The importance of childhood years need not be emphasized. In many cases, they spell the future of the child.

Feeding a generation with sex early in life has huge social costs: teen pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, single parents, fatherless families, lack of income to support a child, lack of opportunity to finish school or find a better job, etc. This is not to disparage single parents. Their efforts to raise a child despite the odds is praiseworthy. But the problems they must overcome could have been avoided. SM's decision will help in avoiding those problems.

Once again, my appreciation and commendation of this well-meaning gesture of SM. I will see to it that this gratitude is translated into real terms by inviting my friends to further patronize SM.

—EDDY CO,
echua@scc.com.ph

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Fiscal crisis used for bootlicking

THE THREATENING economic collapse of the country has triggered a rush of gimmickries among presidential sycophants. But whatever the Bayanihan Fund campaign will raise, it will not make a dent on our gargantuan fiscal problem. The Bayanihan Fund is merely intended to give a semblance of support for the President. Unfortunately, solicitations for the fund are being carried to ridiculous limits. In some instances, it has become obvious that the fund-raising campaign is only being used as an opportunity for boot-licking.

A sad example of this is Philippine National Police chief Edgardo Aglipay's exhortation for the whole PNP command to "voluntarily" donate a day's wage to the noble cause of saving this "strong republic."

Aglipay's motivation in dabbling with the country's economic woes is, of course, evident and it overrides the tradition of honor he may have learned during his stint at the Philippine Military Academy. Retirable in a few months, Aglipay is vulnerable to the whims of President Macapagal-Arroyo who has the power to extend his tenure as PNP chief or appoint him to a juicy position in the bureaucracy. Retiring the generals at the peak of their military and professional careers is the main culprit of the politicalization of the military, by which soldiers, otherwise disciplined in the tradition of courage and honor, are turned into cringing lackeys.

Other potential big contributors tapped by no less than Speaker Jose de Venecia are the *taipans* who joined GMA in the plane in her recent trip to China. If every one of them had faithfully paid their taxes, there would be no need for this facile gesture of fealty to their adopted country.

Debate is raging on how the "love gift" to GMA of a grateful citizenry will be held and used, in as much as nobody trusts anybody. This may best be used to hire more lawyers for the Ombudsman and judges in the Sandiganbayan so we can jail the crooks GMA seems very reluctant to go after.

There are some genuinely concerned groups, religious and charitable institutions that are offering assistance. Their participation will have far better impact if they organized themselves into watchdog bodies monitoring the performance of functionaries in the executive branch and notorious government corporations; of lawmakers so that they will espouse the interest of their constituents rather than serve as tools of lobbyists; and of the judges and justices that we may finally get rid of hoodlums in robes.

It is only when the citizens assert their rights as masters will public officials perform like the public servants that they are.

—E. P. DAKANAY JR.,
43 Baltazar St.,
Philamlife Village, Pamplona,
Las Piñas City

Day-care centers in elementary schools

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo announced at the convention of Department of Education supervisors and in her State of the Nation Address her plan to scrap the "Bridge Program" and instead put up and strengthen kindergarten and day care centers. This is the right solution in solving the problem of the DepEd regarding the upgrading of instruction.

When I was still active in the service as DepEd district supervisor, I was already advocating the establishment of kindergarten classes and day care centers in all elementary schools in all barangays. The reasons I advanced then were the following:

1. My experience as a child when I attended a pre-school class—"Kartilya" or "Katon" in the dialect helped me a lot when I entered Grade One.
2. Adding one more year in the elementary grades or high school will entail so much expenses and additional budget for the government.
3. The kindergarten classes and day care centers can make use of unused facilities and classrooms, and the honorarium of kindergarten classes teachers can be shouldered by the parents and concerned local government units, thus sparing the national government from expenses.
4. Unemployed teachers, who cannot be absorbed by the DepEd or LGUs due to lack of funds, can be employed.
5. Administration and supervision of pre-school classes can be done by school officials of the DepEd.
6. The parents like this idea because it lessens their expenses.
7. Parents will not have to hire housemaids because their children are now in school being taken cared of by teachers.

—HERIBERTO A. BAUTISTA,
municipal consultant,
Office of the Administrative Consultant,
Municipality of Pozorrubio,
Pangasinan

Nary a hint of appreciation for our brave Olympians

THE RECENT arrival of our Olympic Taekwondo team at the airport painted a pitiful sight. One player was limping with a fractured ankle and another was also visibly injured. What pained most was the fact that not a single Philippine government or sports official was around to welcome them. Of the Filipino athletes sent to Athens, these young and brave Taekwondo players performed the best.

Certainly, the sight did not in any way motivate our athletes. There are still many future world competitions and our athletes should be encouraged, not discouraged.

If I were the President, I would have met them in Malacañang to show my appreciation even if they had not won any medal. But, I'm not the President. Our President only has time for the likes of Angelo de la Cruz, Manny Pacquiao, Taiwan's F-4 and—wait for the next photo-op—the Filipino conjoined twins who were successfully separated by surgery in New York.

—JOSIE TEJADA,
telecritic2004@yahoo.com

Good news vs bad news

READING the INQUIRER these past few days dampens the most hopeful of hearts. The front-page highlights the fiscal crisis; more on the crisis on the business pages; and there's more on the opinion pages. It's moral crisis in the entertainment section (lying under oath, prostitution); in the sports page is another crisis (zero medal at the Olympics).

I end up wishing for just one page about the good things happening to Filipinos around the country and the world. Like the one that happened last Sunday when I was in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte to attend the grand launching by Assumption Kauswagan of its year-long jubilee project toward creating a "Peace Sanctuary" there. The event was so simple and solemn, it felt grand. There were no media people around, as peace is not as "news worthy" as war. Yet it was truly a community celebration.

Muslims and Christians came for the brief event, and they were together in the ritual for the healing of the land. They walked side by side, holding candles as they reached out to all corners of the school compound, "reclaiming the sanctity of the place" that had been traumatized by war and bloodshed.

The Assumption sisters served a simple fare of *suman* and *bibingka*, but the people acted as if they were in a banquet. I guess what made the event so touching was the fact that the partakers were simple people dreaming of ambitious projects, like declaring a peace sanctuary. They were led by the Assumption sisters (all senior citizens, except for one novice), three brilliant student leaders, three faculty members, the president of the parents' association, a Muslim parent and the parish representatives.

And that event was just the beginning of a journey that includes all sectors of the Kauswagan community coming together on a peace pact through such events as peace camps, peace education, peace theater, peace concert, peace sportsfest and a peace-covenant signing among government, military, MILF, Muslim and Christian church leaders, etc.

Next stop of the journey is a sportsfest for Muslim and Christian parents. They have simple problems, like looking for sponsors to help them provide meals and snacks as these are really poor people. I was there, and the mere suggestion that we might actually provide for snacks generated a wildly enthusiastic response. But these are events that occur in tiny pockets all the over the country. Unfortunately, these are events that do not seem to draw the interest of the INQUIRER.

—REYNALDO P BARNIDO,
rivers1800@yahoo.com

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INQBox
Question of the Week
September 21: What are your recollections of Martial Law? Any lessons learned?
Texters hus messages R printd in Tuesday's INQBox wil each receiv a Guyito stuffd toy! :)
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(Maximum of 160 characters)

Gov't fat cats under fire

From page A1

officers to receive such fabulous compensation in the face of the government's staggering losses.

Unfortunately, the President can only talk with the GOCC executives and hope that they would have the *delicadeza* to follow her belt-tightening measures, Boncodin said.

She said this was why the government had urged Congress to amend the GOCC charters, to allow Ms Arroyo to specify how much her nominees should receive.

Boncodin said Ms Arroyo would push for the enactment of the Omnibus Reengineering Law that would authorize the President to reorganize the executive branch, including GOCCs.

At a Senate hearing on Tuesday, it was revealed that executives of such GOCCs, as Philippine National Oil Co. and Development Bank of the Philippines, are being paid amounts ranging from P5 million to P9 million a year.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye expressed shock over the amounts cited, saying these were "quite high based on our present financial condition."

"If we are in prosperous times, most people would probably not mind their high salaries," he said yesterday in a radio interview.

But the loans being undertaken by GOCCs, and not the salaries of their executives, are the main cause of the government's losses, Boncodin said.

Special fund

She said the government would push for the removal of the automatic-guarantee provisions in GOCC charters so that the government would not end up paying for their bad loans.

In the House, party-list lawmakers called for a review of the salary schemes of GOCC executives and said a cut would lead to higher wages for rank-and-file government employees.

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran said he was "aghast and outraged" at learning about the salaries of the GOCC executives.

"The national government has been denying government employees a much-needed salary increase for the last five years, yet here it is being revealed that the heads of GOCCs have been getting paychecks equivalent to the accumulated salaries of thousands of rank-and-file employees," he said in a statement.

He suggested that the salaries of GOCC executives be channeled to create a "special fund" to be used in giving lowly paid government employees a salary increase of P3,000 a month.

Rep. Rafael Mariano, also of Anakpawis, pointed out that lowly government employees were receiving only an average of P8,709 a month, or a mere P104,508 a year.

He cited the case of Winston Garcia, who supposedly receives P5.6 million a year as president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System.

"Garcia's annual take-home salary is more than 53 times the annual average pay of a rank-and-file employee who always has a hard time getting benefits from the GSIS," Mariano said.

'Unthinkable'

Coop-Natco Rep. Guillermo Cua said the least that GOCC executives could do was give up their honoraria and allowances as part of their sharing the burden of the fiscal crisis.

He said it was "unthinkable" that the executives would continue to receive these generous amounts "when their GOCC is already bleeding and our country is suffering."

Cua said giving up honoraria and allowances was a common practice in the cooperative sector, which he represents.

"We all have to sacrifice so that we can overcome our country's current fiscal problems," he said.

Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza said the Department of Finance should explain the salaries of these executives, and the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Office of the Ombudsman should subject them to a lifestyle check and an audit of tax payments.

"Apparently, there are those who are immune to the nationwide call for austerity and fiscal prudence," she said. "What's worse, these executives who have made milking cows of the GOCCs may not even be paying their taxes properly, victimizing us twice over."

Maza said it was highly immoral for GOCC officials to be receiving millions of pesos in salaries, allowances and perks in the midst of widespread poverty.

"We cannot allow this to continue," she said.

'Throw them out'

Beltran said Boncodin should recommend the removal of GOCC executives.

He noted that because GOCCs were operating under their own charters, their executives had "the legal basis to raise their own salaries at whim."

"[They] have created their own kingdoms. These kingdoms should be taken down, and the pseudo kings and queens thrown out," he said.

Partido ng Manggagawa Rep. Renato Magtubo, however, said firing these executives would not be enough to make up for the losses they had caused to the national coffers.

He also accused Ms Arroyo of not taking action regarding the salary issue.

But Boncodin complained on Tuesday about the difficulty of doing away with loss-making GOCCs. "Based on our experience, it is easier to create than to abolish GOCCs," she said.

She also said the President would sign an executive order banning the establishment of more subsidiaries and improve the governance of GOCCs by giving more powers to supervising departments and agencies.

Certify as urgent

Rep. Jacinto Paras (LDP, Negros Oriental) said Malacañang should certify the bills seeking to amend the GOCC charters as urgent administration measures.

"Malacañang itself must do this if it is serious in cutting costs," Paras said.

Rep. Ronaldo Zamora (Pwersa ng Masa, San Juan) said the GOCCs, particularly National Power Corp., had a lot of accounting to do regarding the management of their finances.

Zamora cited as example Napocor's earlier P12-billion expense in retiring its employees, only to rehire them.

"Isn't that criminal?" Zamora said. *With a report from Carlito Pablo*

Gov't lost ₱1 billion in $1-B bond deal

From page A1

"The price is a function of supply and demand. The higher the price, the better for the government when we talk of bonds because it means it will get higher proceeds. But when the government gives a deep discount, which it had done in this case, then it loses a lot," a banker said.

When the bonds were priced on Sept. 7, the going rate of the 10-year ROPs was 99.375 and the 15-year sovereigns, 108.5.

But the government and the underwriters agreed on Sept. 8 to sell the bonds at 98 for the ones due 2015 and at 106.25 for the ones due 2025.

Due to its attractive pricing, investors naturally snapped up the bonds at a time when the bond market was considered liquid. No other Asian sovereign issuer had sold bonds recently and the Philippines became the largest sovereign issuer in the region next to Japan.

Thus, the government sold $300 million of bonds due 2015 and $700 million of bonds due 2025.

This means that the government, based on the discount of 1.375 percent on the 10-year papers and 2.25 percent on the 15-year bonds, lost about $20 million.

On the $300 million, 10-year bonds, the administration deprived itself of $4.12 million or P231 million. On the $700 million, 15-year bonds, the government lost $15.75 million or P882 million. Losses just on the pricing stood at about P1.113 billion.

But bankers said the government should also consider the fact that the prices went up by about 2 points on the 10 years and half-a-percentage point on the 15 years the next day. Then this would mean additional losses of $3.38 million on the 10-year bonds and $3.5 million on the 15-year bonds, or additional losses of $6.88 million or P385 million.

As of Sept. 10, the price of 10-year ROPs stood at 100.5 and the 15-year bonds at 109.

In the past, the discount the finance department usually gave when selling bonds was about 25 basis points or a quarter-of-a-percentage point.

Previously, the government would not sell bonds before or during an economic briefing and not before a roadshow to shore up investors' appetite, bring down the cost of borrowing and raise as much money as it can.

The recent bonds were priced before the economic team held a briefing on the afternoon of Sept. 8. It was during this briefing that Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri announced a higher forecast for the gross domestic product, which helped push the price of the ROP the next day.

The roadshow to be conducted by the members of the economic team would start only next week. Usually, ROP prices improve or go up after a roadshow.

Banks were asking why the finance department was rushing the bond deal when Napocor did not have an urgent need for the money.

Officials who quit scored for cop-out

From page A1

highly suspicious.

"Their reasons are not acceptable. Murga is saying that he wants to spend more time with his family when the company he heads is now P1.3 trillion in debt," Ramos said.

"(Figueroa) is saying that she wants a higher paying job, when the agency she heads is one of those responsible for the fiscal crisis," he said.

The KMP said that then President Joseph Estrada was beset by resignations of key government officials when his administration was starting to unravel in the run-up to Edsa II in 2001.

Abnormal balances

A party-list group wants Murga summoned to a hearing in the House of Representatives to explain the finances of Napocor.

Rep. Crispin Beltran of party-list group Bayan Muna is demanding a valid explanation for some "unidentified items and abnormal balances" in Napocor's 2003 financial statements, citing the Commission on Audit's refusal to issue an opinion on the state firm's books because of some discrepancies in the numbers.

Beltran has filed House Resolution No. 218, which directs the House committees on energy and on good government to conduct an inquiry into Napocor's 2003 financial statement.

Beltran said Murga should be summoned to explain how the state firm incurred hundreds of billions of pesos in unsupported disbursements and why its books had inexplicable entries running up to billions of pesos.

"The Senate and House of Representatives should not ignore the damning COA report and immediately summon Murga to explain why Napocor has lost so much money in the last five years," Beltran said.

In a letter to the Napocor board of directors, as lifted from COA's official website, COA director IV Jaime Naranjo said the government audit body was abstaining from issuing an opinion on Napocor's books due to a number of audit constraints.

"Considering the magnitude of the audit constraints and the materiality of their effects to the accounts, the scope of our audit was not sufficient to enable us to express, and we do not express, an opinion on these financial statements," he said.

Irregularities

Among the irregularities found in Napocor's books were six sets of journal vouchers (JVs) involving P50.78 billion and 28 loan utilization vouchers (LUVs) amounting to P868.86 million, all containing adjustments affecting long-term accounts, as well as eight JVs worth P740.86 billion, which also contained adjustments affecting fixed assets accounts.

These, Naranjo said, could not be considered in the auditing process as they all did not bear the approval of proper authorities.

Despite this lack of official approval, adjusting entries were still included in the long-term loans and fixed assets accounts in the state firm's general ledger, he said. These eventually made their way to the final financial statements submitted to the COA for audit.

Some adjustments involving a total of P146.71 billion, which were executed on eight functional groups, were also not made part of the auditing process as these did not have supporting documents that would prove their accuracy, propriety and validity, he said.

Property, plant and equipment (PPE) worth P544.02 billion and material, supplies and equipment (MSE) worth P8.67 billion were likewise not good enough for auditing as they did not have appropriate inventory reports.

"Records do not allow the application of alternative audit procedures to validate the accounts," Naranjo said.

The PPE component of the balance sheet accounted for 54.95 percent of total assets, while the MSE component represented 0.87 percent.

Various Napocor landholdings all over the country, worth P8.83 billion in the state firm's books could not be validated as well due to lack of records and documents proving their ownership.

"Has Napocor been involved in ghost purchases amounting to billions of pesos? If this is one reason for Napocor's financial hemorrhage, then why hasn't the government acted on this before?" Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said.

Responding to allegations of irregularities in its finances, Murga explained at a news briefing yesterday that some of Napocor's lands and property were not titled to Napocor, hence the lack of supporting documents.

He declined to elaborate, however, and did not offer any explanation for the rest of the items in Naranjo's letter, saying only that the matter was currently being clarified with the COA.

But Beltran said Murga should not be allowed to get off the hook that easily. Even if Ms Arroyo had already accepted his retirement and that he would only be at Napocor's helm up to the end of the year, he should give legislators and the public a valid explanation of what the COA referred to as "audit constraints.

Reyes added that the government, with COA's findings on Napocor's 2003 financial results, should all the more exert efforts in getting to the bottom of the anomalies taking place within the power firm.

These irregularities, he said, had resulted in Napocor becoming one of the heaviest burdens for the country to bear, accounting for one-third of the Philippines' consolidated public sector debt.

Napocor's losses last year stood at P113.23 billion, with the possibility of ballooning further to P114.6 billion this year, according to the state-run power firm's own estimates.

Instead of the government allowing Napocor to collect an additional 98 centavos per kilowatt-hour from its customers, Reyes said there should be a thorough scrutiny of how Napocor got into such a deep mess in the first place.

FAT CATS IN GOVERNMENT

2002

	Name, position, agency	Total salaries and allowances
1	Sergio Antonio Apostol, chair & president, PNOC	9,221,058.83
2	Edgardo Garcia, COO, DBP	7,478,779.74
3	Rufino Bomasang, president & CEO, PNOC	6,123,615.00
4	Victor Villar, SEVP, DBP	6,056,855.04
5	Thelmo Cunanan, chair & CEO, PNOC	6,052,170.54
6	Panser Tumangan, SEVP, DBP	5,916,682.64
7	Elizabeth Ong, EVP, DBP	5,870,005.92
8	Winston F. Garcia, president & GM, GSIS	5,620,705.00
9	Rolando Geronimo, EVP, DBP	5,505,263.52
10	Vivencio Macapagal, EVP, DBP	5,281,793.44
11	Reynaldo Palmiery, EVP & COO, GSIS	4,926,742.00
12	Jose Gangan, president & COO, PNOC	4,681,868.53
13	Rafael Buenaventura, governor, BSP	4,667,252.56
14	Victorio Mario Dimagiba, VP, PNOC	4,602,676.60
15	Carlos Cruz, EVP, DBP	4,380,631.88
16	Margarito Teves, vice chair, LBP	4,275,508.46
17	Samson Javellana, VP, PNOC	4,055,850.18
18	Jose Jesus Laurel, VP, PNOC	3,870,168.98
19	Gilda Pico, EVP, LBP	3,612,600.00
20	Juan Quintos Jr., board member, BSP	3,545,574.08
21	Armando Tetangco Jr., deputy governor, BSP	3,501,389.38
22	Elsa Guevarra, SVP, DBP	3,500,277.86
23	Rafael del Pilar, VP, PNOC	3,379,265.00
24	Rufo Colayco, president & CEO, BCDA	3,322,000.00
25	Valentina Ricasio, SVP, DBP	3,262,104.80
26	Melito Salazar Jr., board member, BSP	3,248,240.67
27	Antonino Alindogan Jr., board member, BSP	3,241,057.87
28	Armando Suratos, deputy governor, BSP	3,228,390.33
29	Alberto Reyno, SVP DBP	3,213,322.28
30	Alberto Reyes, deputy governor, BSP	3,170,037.97
31	Cecilia Dimagiba, SVP, DBP	3,104,331.04
32	Armando Samia, FSVP, DBP	3,086,837.50
33	Alfonso Cruz, EVP, LBP	3,073,780.00
34	Corazon Conde, SVP, DBP	3,065,161.52
35	Maria Laurel, SVP, SSS	3,045,929.12
36	Norberto Nazareno, president, PDIC	3,044,641.94
37	Antonio Hernandez, SVP, LBP	3,021,012.73
38	Ambrocio de Leon, SVP, DBP	2,895,259.54
39	Dolores Santiago, SVP, DBP	2,850,428.82
40	Iluminada Limjoco, SVP, DBP	2,846,847.42
41	Herminia Mendoza, SVP, DBP	2,837,326.50
42	Leopoldo Salvador, SVP, DBP	2,812,006.72
43	Jesus Macalincag, SVP, DBP	2,802,677.72
44	Corazon de los Santos, SVP, LBP	2,791,350.00
45	Miguel Gonzales, SVP, LBP	2,773,276.27
46	Ciño Martinez, president & CEO, FilOil Dev't Mngt Corp.	2,732,092.00
47	Felicito Payumo, chair & administrator, SBMA	2,650,850.01
48	Fernando Gana, VP, GSIS	2,631,394.00
49	Don Villamayor, SVP, DBP	2,625,316.86
50	Romeo Roderos, SVP, DBP	2,586,330.68
51	Amalio Mallari, SVP, GSIS	2,583,118.45
52	Rodrigo Supena, SVP, LBP	2,582,730.00
53	Enriquetta Disuanco, SVP, GSIS	2,551,067.02
54	Jose Nograles, SVP, LBP	2,546,850.00
55	Aurora Mathay, SVP, GSIS	2,528,570.80
56	Teresita Hatta, assistant governor, BSP	2,499,793.19
57	Julio Navarette, SVP, GSIS	2,498,552.63
58	Emmanuel Angeles, president & CEO, CDC	2,475,384.20
59	Rosalinda Magat, SVP, DBP	2,447,338.38
60	Jose Victor Lubiano, EVP, CDC	2,390,417.20
61	Jesus Guevara, SVP, DBP	2,376,995.30
62	Benjamin Vivas Jr., SVP, GSIS	2,366,783.02
63	Corazon de la Paz, president, SSS	2,341,100.00
64	Fernando Campana, VP, GSIS	2,336,046.31
65	Arnaldo Cuasay, SVP, GSIS	2,330,789.00
66	Concepcion L. Madarang, VP, GSIS	2,329,001.09
67	Andres Rustia, assistant governor, BSP	2,284,326.14
68	Miguel Roca, SVP, SSS	2,283,960.00
69	Leticia Sagcal, SVP, GSIS	2,241,319.45
70	Francisco Duque, president & CEO, PHIC	2,215,744.00
71	May Catherine Ciriaco, VP, SSS	2,206,403.90
72	Alex Valenogrina, VP, GSIS	2,188,704.00
73	Juanito Lao, VP, SSS	2,174,645.00
74	Antonio Maralit, VP, SSS	2,163,725.00
75	Isaac S. Puno III, EVP, BCDA	2,141,297.00
76	Rizalino S. Navarro, chair, CDC	2,140,124.00
77	Erlinda del Rosario, VP, SSS	2,137,956.98
78	Maria Fe Dayco, VP, GSIS	2,135,540.03
79	Aurora Ortega, VP, SSS	2,135,362.36
80	Mel Nio P. Racimo, VP, GSIS	2,134,664.78
81	Simon R. Paterno, president, DBP	2,129,121.94
82	Ma. Cristina P. Racimo, VP, GSIS	2,107,941.03
83	Consuelo C. Villamar, VP, GSIS	2,106,666.73
84	Josefina L. Valera, VP, GSIS	2,105,641.03
85	Ruben V. Aguilar, VP, GSIS	2,105,296.89
86	Merceditas Caculitan, SVP, SSS	2,076,268.16
87	Vicente B. Valdepenas Jr., board member, BSP	2,047,526.56
88	Carmen de la Cruz, VP, SSS	2,009,620.00
89	Joel C. Valdes, president, TIDCORP	2,002,172.28
90	Alfredo Villasanta, VP, SSS	1,997,115.24
91	Felipe Carino, VP, SSS	1,994,550.00
92	Richard M. Martinez, VP, GSIS	1,990,158.98
93	Adela S. Melendres, VP, GSIS	1,978,203.51
94	Mario Sibucao, VP, SSS	1,976,877.84
95	Roberto Malonzo, EVP, GSIS	1,945,401.78
96	Iluminada Le Cabigas, president and CEO, PCFC	1,912,376.00
97	Jose Isidro N. Camacho, secretary, DOF	1,909,488.67
98	Rosalinda Casiguran, EVP/COO, PDIC	1,907,508.69
99	Angelico Salud, president, NHMFC	1,899,441.69
100	Teodoro B. Montecillo, board member, BSP	1,841,338.37

2001

1	Ma. Livia S. de Leon, chair, PCSO	9,855,754.21
2	Virgilio Angelo, GM, PCSO	6,510,306.14
3	Remedios Macalincag, president, DBP	5,254,019.12
4	Lilia Bautista, commissioner, SEC	4,241,200.00
5	Ricardo Golpeo, GM, PCSO	4,132,174.50
6	Rodrigo Supena, SVP, LBP	4,067,050.00
7	Edgardo Garcia, COO, DBP	3,840,546.56
8	Margarito Teves, BOD chair, PCFC	3,816,200.00
9	Horacio Templo, EVP, SSS	3,692,499.96
10	Jesus Diaz, EVP, LBP	3,560,550.00
11	Norberto Nazareno, president, P[illegible]	3,388,145.86
12	Rogelio Singson, chair, BCDA	3,335,935.75
13	Gilda Pico, EVP, LBP	3,138,100.00
14	Panser Tumangan, SEVP, DBP	3,187,199.40
15	Victor Villar, SEVP, DBP	3,162,939.46
16	Maria Laurel, SVP, SSS	3,162,291.14
17	Rolando Geronimo, EVP, DBP	2,642,396.38
18	Elizabeth Ong, EVP, DBP	2,830,147.77
19	Josefina Poblador, commissioner, SEC	2,806,400.00
20	Edgar Martinez, commissioner, SEC	2,806,400.00
21	Fe Eloisa Gloria, commissioner, SEC	2,806,400.00
22	Antonio Hernandez, SVP, LBP	2,712,501.82
23	Alfonso Cruz, EVP, LBP	2,677,115.91
24	Corazon de los Santos, SVP, LBP	2,548,380.00
25	Isaac Puno III, EVP, BCDA	2,517,364.30
26	Vivencio M. Macapagal, EVP, DBP	2,497,864.91
27	Miguel Roca, SVP, SSS	2,411,283.78
28	Antonio Maralit, VP, SSS	2,262,953.55
29	Jose Carmelo Nograles, SVP, LBP	2,250,620.00
30	Carlos Cruz, FSVP, DBP	2,233,565.60
31	Manuel Crisostomo, CEO, HDMF	2,225,877.50
32	Merceditas Caculitan, SVP, SSS	2,200,126.70
33	Miguel Gonzales, SVP, LBP	2,188,040.00
34	May Catherine Ciriaco, VP, SSS	2,190,637.00
35	Juanito Lao, VP, SSS	2,155,425.19
36	Alfredo Villasanta, VP, SSS	2,097,500.00
37	Carmen de La Cruz, VP, SSS	2,083,507.00
38	Hernando Perez, secretary, DOJ	2,079,567.14
39	Mario Sibucao, VP, SSS	2,077,645.79
40	Erlinda del Rosario, VP, SSS	2,069,050.65
41	Aurora Ortega, VP, SSS	2,060,772.05
42	Jose Mabanta, adm[illegible]istrator, MWSS	1,961,210.00
43	Elsa Guev[illegible] DBP	1,954,670.61
44	Felipe Ca[illegible] SSS	1,944,500.35
45	[illegible]arissa Suganta, VP, SSS	1,891,790.12
46	Reynaldo Venzon, VP, SSS	1,887,516.40
47	Gamalin Oczon, VP, SSS	1,877,572.50
48	Valentina Ricasio, SVP, DBP	1,871,848.29
49	Restituto de Quiros, director, PCSO	1,847,639.60
50	Margarita Juico, director, PCSO	1,838,520.34
51	Rosalinda Casiguran, EVP/COO, PDIC	1,823,907.50
52	Jose Medina Jr., BOD EVP, PCFC	1,822,034.75
53	Alberto Reyno, SVP, DBP	1,808,753.38
54	Herminia Castillo, AGM-Finance & Admin., MIAA	1,781,071.15
55	Elpidio Mendoza, AGM-Maintenance, MIAA	1,765,841.76
56	Jose Alcuaz, director, PCSO	1,758,676.79
57	Arturo Borjal, director, PCSO	1,755,527.51
58	Ernie Jara, VP, SSS	1,752,914.63
59	Herminia Mendoza, SVP, DBP	1,740,547.93
60	Nicholas Balbuena, VP, SSS	1,734,832.30
61	Lilia de Lima, Dir. Gen. & vice chair, Peza	1,724,000.00
62	Armando Samia, FSVP, DBP	1,722,598.17
63	Dolores Santiago, SVP, DBP	1,717,307.60
64	Jose Bautista, VP, SSS	1,711,528.57
65	Cecilio Bautista, AGM-SES, MIAA	1,700,145.26
66	Ofelia Bulaong, director/CEO, FCCC	1,694,323.66
67	Cecilia Canlas, VP, SSS	1,686,119.41
68	Amador Montero, SVP, SSS	1,683,487.00
69	Ambrocio de Leon, SVP, DBP	1,673,905.14
70	Pio Benavidez, VP, NPC	1,667,854.00
71	Jesus Macalincag, SVP, DBP	1,658,024.07
72	Corazon Conde, SVP, DBP	1,650,038.42
73	Jesus Guevara, SVP, DBP	1,633,482.72
74	Cecilia M. Dimagiba, SVP, DBP	1,623,005.00
75	Don D. Villamayor, SVP, DBP	1,610,832.69
76	Alfredo Patricio, SAGM, MIAA	1,604,137.21
77	Romeo Roderos, SVP, DBP	1,599,782.78
78	Angelico Salud, president, NHMFC	1,593,498.42
79	Leopoldo Salvador, SVP, DBP	1,680,074.23
80	Danilo A. Marino, deputy director, BSP	1,537,012.09
81	Nestor Salario, director, BSP	1,535,001.31
82	Iluminada C. Limjoco, SVP, DBP	1,526,941.23
83	Gumersindo Arroyo, SVP, PDIC	1,521,236.15
84	Josue N. Bellosillo, chair, Senate Electoral Tribunal	1,514,000.00
85	Orlando Assidao, officer-in-charge, BSP	1,511,823.50
86	Reynaldo N. Dalma Jr., SVP, PHIC	1,511,138.00
87	Rosalinda D. Magat, SVP, DBP	1,500,531.60
88	Jose F. Mabanta, vice chair, MWSS	1,499,965.45
89	Vitaliano Nañagas, president, SSS	1,492,148.63
90	Edgar Sollapos, SVP, SSS	1,477,257.48
91	Marcos J. Siongco Jr., managing director, BSP	1,473,609.72
92	Ricardo Tan, former EVP, PDIC	1,472,465.79
93	Santiago M. Kapunan, member, Senate Electoral Tribunal	1,454,000.00
94	Reynato S. Puno, member, Senate Electoral Tribunal	1,454,000.00
95	Nestor D. Garcia, director, BSP	1,442,723.46
96	Eusebio B. Orbos Jr., BOD/president, PCFC	1,441,884.09
97	Benjamin Abella, director/president-OIC, Expo98 Corp.	1,434,591.00
98	Nievelena Rosete, vice president, BCDA	1,398,958.92
99	Virginia Castillo, SVP, PDIC	1,376,765.77
100	Simeon Gonzales, VP, SSS	1,375,594.00

Source: DBM

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Lawyers pursue protest vs court fee hike

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—It's the judiciary's turn to face a drubbing over the budget deficit. Members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines urged all litigants and lawyers of Baguio and Dagupan cities to wear black or white shirts this week to protest the 1,000-percent increase in many court docket fees, which were implemented in August.

IBP chapters in Northern Luzon also scheduled a Friday protest rally.

Court employees declined to explain why court fees rose this much for high profile cases.

Lawyer Abelardo Estrada, former IBP chair for Baguio and Benguet, said his clients were surprised to discover that docketing fees for annulment proceedings increased from the regular P300 to P3,500.

But court employees referred to a December 2003 edition of the IBP newsletter, which announced the controversial increase in "special allowances."

Republic Act 9227 allows Supreme Court and Court of Appeals justices and regional trial court judges to increase allowances.

"These (special allowances) would be paid from legal fees collected by courts other than those already set aside by the Judiciary Development Fund in Presidential Decree 1949," the newsletter said.

Citing the government's P200-billion budget deficit, Baguio lawyers asked the Supreme Court to defer the implementation of RA 9227 and its modifying circular that raises legal fees.

In a resolution, the IBP Baguio-Benguet chapter said the fee increases were applied without consulting local lawyers.

According to IBP officials led by IBP Baguio-Benguet president Daniel Mangallin, the effect of the legal fee increases is the sudden inability of the public to access the courts.

The circular still exempts poor litigants from paying the fees. But it requires judges to now charge a minimum fee of P3,000 for officiating civil weddings. This is the same amount the courts charge litigants who will seek a review of judicial rulings.

The courts also receive commissions for rulings that involve money. The circular grants the courts a 2 percent commission on all sums not exceeding P40,000 and 1.5 percent commission on all sums in excess of P40,000 that are awarded to a litigant.

This month's bar examinees were also affected by the circular. It states that applicants taking the bar examination must pay P2,250, and additional P200 for returning examinees that is multiplied by the number of times the applicant took the exam.

Examinees who pass the exams must pay the same fee to be admitted to the bar.

The circular grants court witnesses a P200 allowance for each day's appearance in cases heard by the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals or the regional trial courts.

Many court employees here said they will join this week's protests "in their individual capacity, not as members of the court" because they fear that the mass action can jeopardize their own salary increases.

Clark, Subic not smuggling centers, says SBMA head

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—"Where has Sen. Richard Gordon been all this time? It's as if he has discovered something new." This was the reaction of Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo to Gordon's statements that as many as 90,000 cars had entered the country illegally through the SBMA.

Gordon raised this point during a joint hearing of the Senate committees on trade and industry and economic affairs on Tuesday.

But Payumo shrugged off allegations that Subic and the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga have become the centers of car smuggling in the country.

"Congress' committees on transportation and communication, and on trade and industry have both ruled out any violation of existing laws covering the importation, conversion and even selling of second hand vehicles," he said in a statement.

Payumo also disputed the allegations of Gordon, his predecessor at the SBMA, that there was no vehicle smuggling during Gordon's term.

"Remember the brand new sport utility vehicles (SUVs), such as Lexus, Expedition, Land Cruiser and other expensive vehicles, (whose importers) were paying only about P400,000 to P500,000 in customs duties and taxes instead of P2 million to P3 million (because they) simply added jump seats to make these nine-seater vans?" Payumo asked.

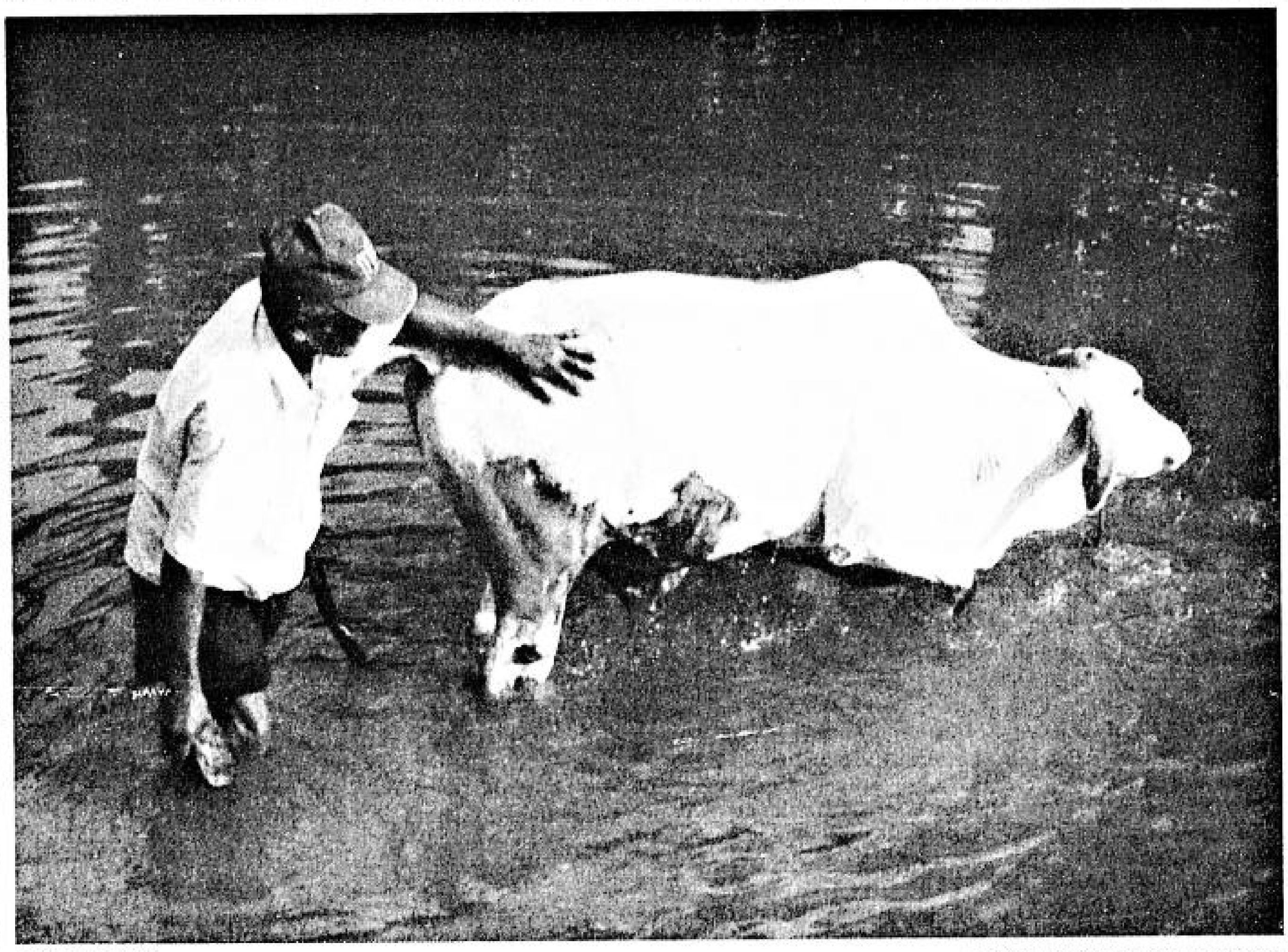
He said the SBMA confiscated several dozens of these SUVs in just two months after he assumed office in 1998.

"It's impossible that during (Gordon's) six-year term (from 1992 to 1998), there had been no importation of the brand new vehicles at all," Payumo said.

He said the issue of conversion of right hand drive vehicles had been discussed during the 12th Congress and was well publicized in newspapers.

He said a House committee report showed that "no law is violated by the importation of right hand drive and second hand vehicles and even selling in Subic freeport."

"Importation of RHD vehicles is not costing the government huge losses but in fact has caused the enormous increase of tax collections in Subic," the report said. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



BATH TIME
A man gives his cow a bath in Candon City, Ilocos Sur.
LEONCIO BALBIN/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Gas station owners close shop due to price hikes

LUCENA CITY—An official of a nationwide association of gasoline dealers said gasoline station owners across the country started closing shop due to losses as a result of continuing increases in oil prices.

"Quite a number of our fellow gasoline dealers have already folded up after these successive oil price increases. Owning a gasoline station is no longer a profitable business this time," Perlita Villafuerte, president of the Petron Dealers Association of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER.

The association has 1,200 members across the country.

Villafuerte, however, did not provide the latest count of how many among her members had already closed shop but said some gasoline stations closed after only a few months of operation.

"Most of them wanted to serve their respective communities but they had to close or suffer more losses," Villafuerte said.

Villafuerte said gasoline stations belonging to other oil companies are also closing shop.

"I received reports that gasoline dealers from the two other big companies are also experiencing the same sad turn of events," she added.

Villafuerte was also a former president of all gasoline dealers nationwide.

Since January, oil firms in the country have raised the prices of gasoline at least eight times for a cumulative total of P4.70 to P4.80 a liter.

"Before the oil deregulation, we used to earn 5.8 percent from the total cost per liter. Now, it is down to just 3.5 percent," she said.

Shrinking income

In peso terms, she said since 1998 when the price of diesel was only P9 per liter, gasoline dealers had been receiving a return at least 70 centavos per liter.

But now that diesel costs more than P20 per liter, what they earn is a measly 10 centavos in profit. "It's now like 80 centavos."

"And from this, we have to spend for the salaries of our employees and utilities, station rental, power bill, etc., which are always rising. But our earning remains constant," Villafuerte said.

She said a moderate gasoline station owner shells out at least P3 million as an initial investment.

Villafuerte recalled that in 1976, when they put up their first gasoline station, the price of diesel was only 30 centavos per liter.

"Our business is also credit intensive. But we have to (borrow) in order to survive," she said.

New system

She said she is appealing to Petron to adopt a "percentage-profit-margin" system instead of the current system where the dealer's income is based on "absolute peso value."

She said under the current setup if the costs of oil products are high, the dealers should also have a high return on investment and vice versa.

"Our mother company understands our plight. It is receptive," Villafuerte said.

She said a gasoline dealer is better off during the regulated period of the industry. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

DPAs for gov't in Abu Sayyaf slain in Zamboanga

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Unidentified suspects gunned down two men, who turned out to be government agents who infiltrated the Abu Sayyaf in a busy section of the downtown area here on Tuesday afternoon.

Senior Supt. Mario Yanga, city police director, said Ali Malabon, 24, of Barangay Talon-talon here and Abraham Mubin, 40, of Barangay Santo Niño, also in this city, were identified through ID cards issued them by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica).

Yanga said the two suspects arrived on Buenavista Street with the two slain men around 2 p.m.

He said witnesses told police the four men were seen talking while walking toward a house in the area.

Later, the two suspects pulled out handguns and repeatedly shot the government agents.

Wanted men

During follow-up investigation, Yanga said they found out that the two slain agents were among the wanted Abu Sayyaf bandits who are being hunted in connection with the mass hostage-taking of civilians in Sumisip and Tuburan towns in Basilan on March 20, 2000.

One of the victims, Claretian priest Fr. Rhoel Gallardo, was later beheaded.

But some quarters expressed doubts if one of the slain agents was only using an alias.

Records compiled by the INQUIRER showed that on Nov. 3, 2001, then Col. Hermogenes Esperon, former commander of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade based in Basilan, presented the body of a slain Abu Sayyaf bandit and identified it as Ali Malabon.

More Malabons

After his reported death, four more suspects named Ali Malabon had been arrested according to Ricardo Cabaron, Western Mindanao deputy prosecutor.

Yanga said the two agents could have been executed because of their role in the government's anti-Abu Sayyaf operations. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DPWH chief says infra sets map to Mindanao peace

INFRASTRUCTURE projects will set the road map to peace in Mindanao.

Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez stressed this yesterday in support of President Macapagal-Arroyo's agenda for a just end to the peace process with a package of infrastructure projects.

Citing peace initiatives in conflict-torn areas of Mindanao, Soriquez said several infrastructure support projects are either underway or will be started in the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte; Sultan Kudarat; Maguindanao; Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi.

Among the major ongoing projects in Mindanao initiated last year by the President is the 77.46 km improvement of the national highway in the provinces of Lanao and Zamboanga del Sur under the Mindanao Second Roads Improvement Project funded from a loan from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED).

Abdulfatak Pandapatan, DPWH-KFAED project management office deputy director, said the project is progressing according to schedule.

Cop says private armies make peace in Abra 'elusive'

By Artha Kira Paredes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BANGUED, Abra—The top police official in the Cordillera said attaining peace and order in Abra remains to be "an elusive dream" because of the existence of private or partisan armed groups (PAG) maintained by some local officials.

"(We are) sad to admit (this) but PAGs truly exist in Abra. Since 1989, Abra residents have been living under the culture of violence," Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Cordillera police director, said in a statement.

He said despite efforts of the police against PAGs and their drive against loose firearms, armed groups in the province continue to exist because of the "culture of vengeance, political patronage, tolerance to aggression and proliferation of loose guns."

"The PAG system develops into a sanctuary for aggrieved parties who claim that cases against reigning conventional politicians in the province or their goons are usually written off apparently because the law enforcers, prosecutors, the courts, the correctional institutions and witnesses are either afraid of the (power holders) or they are beholden to (them)," Albano said.

He said the murder of two Abra mayors in recent years created fear among politicians and political candidates and encouraged them to employ armed men.

Victims

Tubo Mayor Jose Segundo and Tineg Mayor Clarence Benwaren were killed in 2000 and 2002, respectively, by suspected members of PAGs maintained by their political opponents.

Albano said "finger pointing is not the solution" to the presence of PAGs in the province. He urged all sectors to help, saying stopping the operations of PAGs is not the sole responsibility of the police.

"Leaders must head by example. It is a known fact that traditional politicians in Abra are even the ones maintaining sophisticated PAGs," Albano said.

Several officials in the province claimed that Gov. Vicente Valera is the biggest employer of PAGs in Abra.

"(Valera) initiates trouble using his PAG that is composed of rebel returnees. But then, he would deny (that he is maintaining a private army) and use his influence over the military and the media to paint a very bad picture of his political opponents," an Abra mayor said.

"It is an open secret in Abra that many rebel returnees end up (being employed in his) PAG," the mayor added.

But Valera, in an earlier interview, denied reports that he is maintaining an armed group, saying the only armed men around him are his police security escorts.

Albano said politicians should abolish their PAGs to maintain peace and order in the province.

Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. said he has asked the House of Representatives to investigate the presence of private armies in Abra.

Summary killings keep cell phone thieves at bay

By G. Lacorte
Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—The gangland style killings of suspected criminals here could have had an effect on the number of cases of cell phone theft which was significantly lower than that in other urban areas.

Police continue to deny the existence of the Davao Death Squad, said to be a group of vigilantes who are behind the summary executions of crime suspects in the city.

"What they call the vigilante is just a creation of the media," police city director Conrado Laza declared.

"What's going on in our streets are just common crimes that are also happening anywhere else in the country and the world. There's no single group that can be pinned down for all these killings," he said.

CELL PHONE THEFT
Inquirer
InqTV
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Bandera
Cebu Daily News
Tumbok

But Laza admits that there is a decline in cell phone theft and in the city's crime rate in general. From a 7 percent crime rate last year, the rate went down to 6.67 percent in the first semester, much lower than Metro Manila's 18 percent or Cebu's 27 percent.

Increased police presence in the streets seems to be working, Laza said.

But it hasn't put a stop to the street killings.

On Aug. 24, 18-year-old Manuel Garcia was shot by motorcycle-riding gunmen just a few minutes after he was released from jail. He had been detained for cell phone snatching.

Garcia was shot on Washington Street, just a couple of steps from the San Pedro police precinct. He was the 67th victim of unsolved killings in the city since January.

Laza said the police were having a hard time going after the perpetrators of the killings because no witnesses would come out in the open.

"Because everybody thinks that there is only one group behind these killings, no one dares step forward and testify. This makes the police work harder," he said.

Several of the victims were involved in petty theft, including cell phone snatching. A number of them were minors.

Younger thieves

Police Supt. Jovito Morin Diray, chief of the investigation division, said cell phone thieves were getting younger.

They're usually within the age range of 15 to 20, male, unemployed.

"Somebody must be training these minors for the modus operandi of cell phone theft, which include, among others, snatching, pickpocketing and outright robbery . . . cell phone snatching is becoming a lucrative business since cell phones sell faster than a piece of jewelry," he said.

But the local police have no hard data on cell phone theft.

The cases are lumped with other theft cases, which reached a total of 165 in July, down 16 percent from the 198 cases registered a year ago.

SPO2 Stephen Abella, chief of the theft and robbery station at the San Pedro police station, said most of the thieves who landed at his station had been caught before, sniffing rugby in the city streets.

Having spent time in and out of jail, these rugby boys mastered the art of cell phone snatching. "The more they stay in jail, the better snatchers they become," Abella said.

Depending on the cost of the cell phones involved, snatchers serve a minimum of six months to four years in prison. But because cell phone owners refuse to pursue cases as soon as they recover their units, snatchers get out of jail unscathed, says Executive Judge Paul Arcangel of the Regional Trial Court.

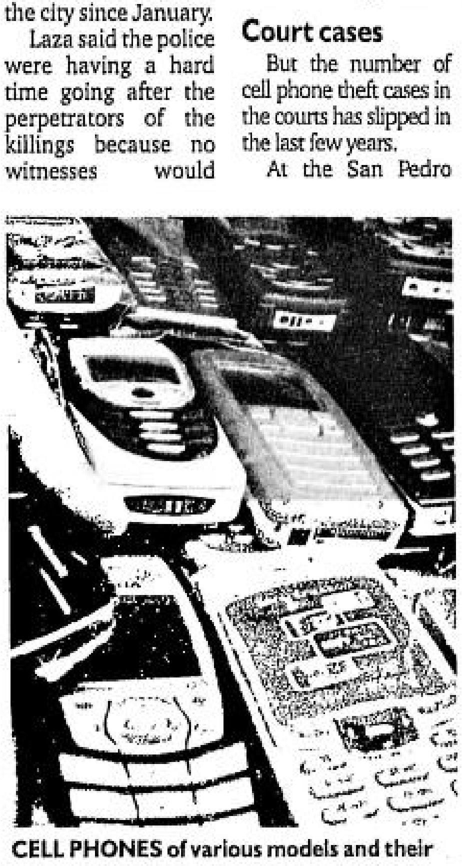
"After they get out, they start all over again," he said. "Just like in the street killings, people refuse to cooperate."

Court cases

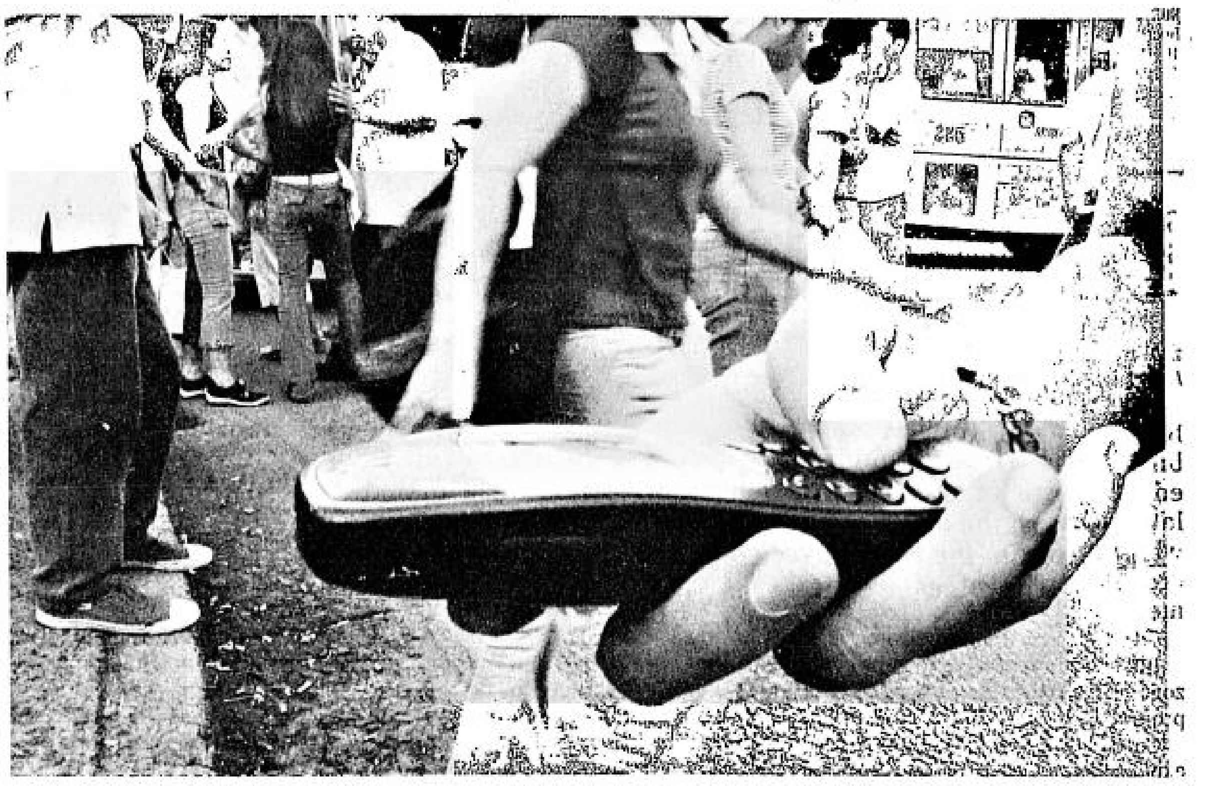
But the number of cell phone theft cases in the courts has slipped in the last few years.

At the San Pedro precinct alone, there used to be three to four cases filed against cell phone snatchers a week, Abella said. But he has not had to file a case in the last two weeks.

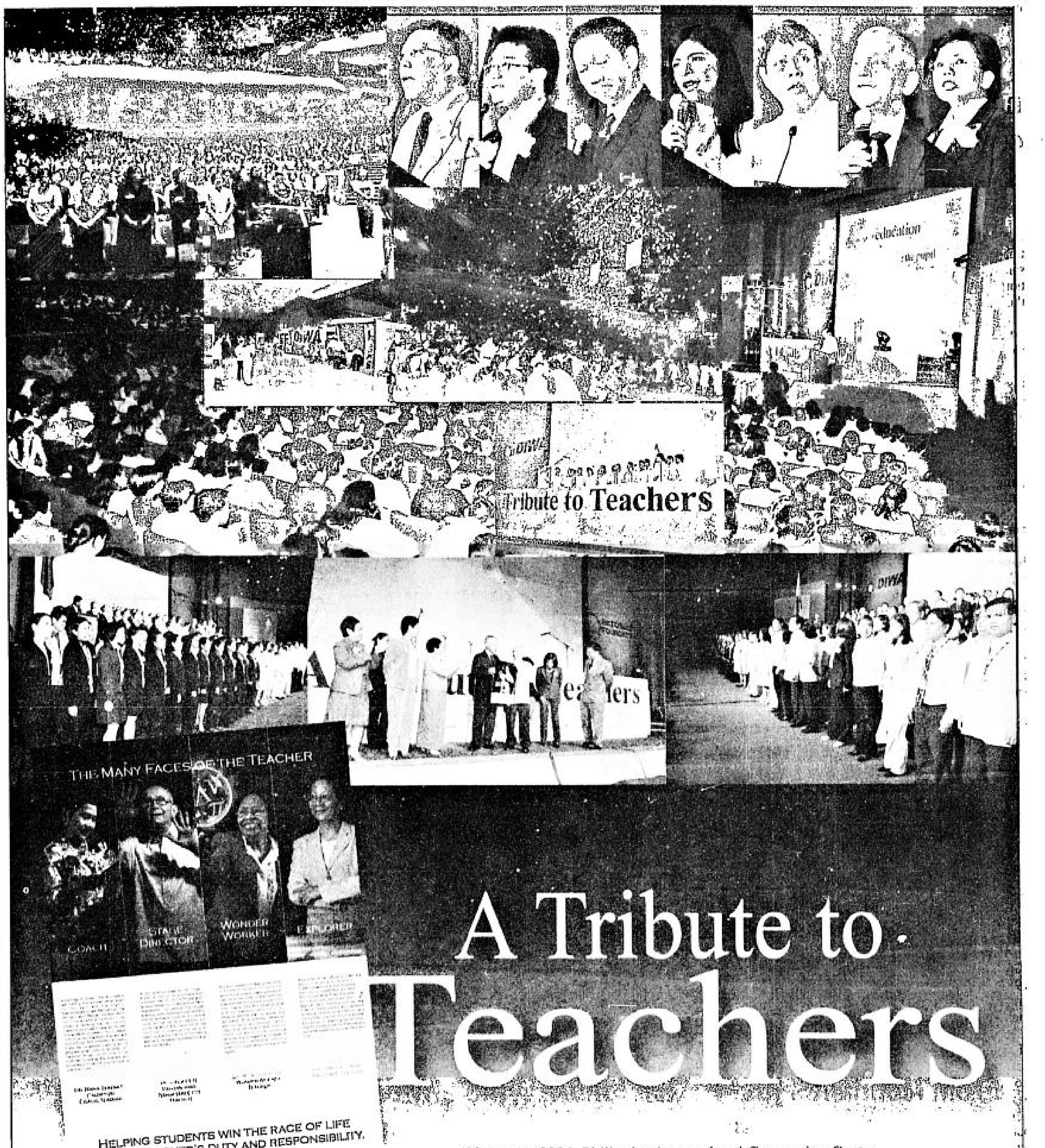
Perhaps they are afraid, said San Pedro Chief Insp. Matthew Baccay of the San Pedro police. He, however, also refused to believe that the vigilantes really exist.



CELL PHONES of various models and their accessories take center stage at a stall in Manila. RAFFY LERMA, PDI PHOTO



THE FINGERS may be well trained to text, but not to keep cell phones safe from snatching or theft especially if the device is used in public places. RAFFY LERMA/PDI PHOTO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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Martial law eclipsed Naga fiesta tragedy

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Naga City

ONE TRAGIC Sunday, 32 years ago, the regionwide fiesta of the Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia ended with the death of 138 people after an old suspension bridge across the Naga River collapsed from the weight of some 500 devotees.

But the accident, considered the most tragic in Bicol, that happened on Sept. 16, 1972, was overshadowed by the declaration of martial law by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

It happened as thousands of devotees were bringing back the centuries-old image of the Nuestra Señora to its old residence at the Peñafrancia Church from its devotion altar at the Naga Cathedral, through a penitential procession in the main streets of Naga City down to the river where the colorful fluvial procession began.

Four days later after the Colgante Bridge fell, public concern over the victims settled on the back burner. Media networks were closed and journalists were hounded by the Philippine Constabulary and the Philippine Army.

Until now, nothing marks the fateful event in the religious feast of the only regional fiesta in the country, except for a diorama at the museum of the Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia. The new generation basks in ignorance of the tragedy.

As Naga mourned and buried the dead, Marcos' spokesperson, then Public Information Secretary Francisco Tatad, read on television the infamous Proclamation No. 1081 on the eve of Sept. 21, 1972.

Vicente Sibulo, then Naga mayor, recalled how quickly the declaration of martial law stole the limelight from local concerns as uncertainties overwhelmed the city government. Every official was deemed resigned unless reappointed by the regime.

Politics also limited the capability of the city government to respond comprehensively to the tragedy, according to Sibulo, who was a key leader of the Liberal Party against Marcos' Nacionalista Party.

The former mayor, who is now 79, said that since Marcos suspended the writ of habeas corpus on Aug. 21, 1971, the impending declaration of martial law heightened anxieties and weakened the disposition of governmental functions.

Being a political leader of the opposition party, Sibulo could hardly mobilize government resources from the Executive department if only to make the most of what the city government could do to help the victims' families cope with the tragedy.

"When I approached the regional office of the Department of Public Works and Highways, the officials hesitated to allow me to use their crane. But because of the immediacy and magnitude of the tragedy, I think they had been humane enough to finally lend the crane to the city government for use in hauling the debris of the collapsed bridge," Sibulo said.

Even as the accident hogged the national headlines the day after the incident, the Marcos administration responded to the situation only three days later.

"It was then Local Government Secretary (Jose) Roño, once my colleague at the national organization of mayors, who personally came and assisted us to get over with the problem," Sibulo said.

He said Marcos approved the fund allocation for the construction of a new concrete Colgante Bridge when he was forced to ally himself with the dictator during martial law. The bridge was finished in the early 1980s.

The best

For Jose Obias, a married priest, the tragedy brought out the best among the Nagueños as they coped without any outside assistance during the first 24 hours.

The local mass media facilitated the networking of volunteers and assistance offered by businessmen, social workers and countless sympathetic individuals.

"Almost everyone in Naga City and nearby towns wanted to give their share that lightened up the sorrow," Obias recalled.

Obias believed that the tragedy forebode the coming of the martial law period. Every time something happened during the Feast of Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia, an equivalent situation followed, he said.

On one occasion, he said, the image of their patron saint fell into the Naga River. A month later, a big fire razed the public market.

But Obias was proud to say that he had not heard of any report that the dead were divested of jewelry.

One victim, who was electrocuted, was identified through the ring he wore several hours after the body was retrieved from the wreckage and laid on the concrete pavement.

Tomas Bongalonta, 68, remembered the wailing, crying, screaming and the pandemonium that erupted seconds after the bridge fell. He was shocked by the horror unfolding before him.

Bongalonta was standing about a meter from the edge of the bridge when he suddenly heard a loud boom.

Sibulo, who was riding with local dignitaries in the pagoda of the Nuestra Señora, said the fluvial procession was immediately called off and the city officials began the task of organizing rescue operations.

The tragedy could have been prevented, he said, but policemen could not stop the throngs of devotees gathering up on the bridge as the procession neared. The people did not heed the police warning of overloading the old bridge, he said. By 2 p.m., the crowd filled up to the rafters.

Manuel Sadiua, 69, a member of the Naga City Press Club, arrived several minutes after the bridge fell and reported the drama of rescue efforts by volunteers from among the spectators. They grabbed and plucked out the victims from the wreckage.

Sadiua lost count of the number of bodies fished out of the waters and piled up till the next morning. He remembered the dead being laid side by side, on a concrete pavement of the former station site of the Radyo ng Bayan, three blocks from the river.

As darkness fell, the pall of death swept the city, he said. Sirens moaned and church bells tolled amid the frenzy and anxiety of rescuers, families of the victims, and the whole local populace.

Fernando del Rosario, 72, said many of the victims could have been electrocuted. The live wire of decorative lights on the bridge snapped and fell into the river, he said.

He recalled frogmen from the Philippine Navy scouring the wreckage site until the last body was retrieved late in the morning the next day.

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MRT, LRT fare hike looms

By Gil Cabacungan

COMMUTERS who regularly take the light rail trains should hold on to their seats.

After electricity rates, Malacañang will remove its subsidy on railway transit fares once the urban rail loop has been completed with the linkup of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) with the Light Rail Transit in 2007.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin told the INQUIRER editorial staff Tuesday night that the removal of the government subsidy—pegged at P7.5 billion by the LRT Authority in 2003—would push up the LRT and MRT fares.

Boncodin said the government could not go on subsidizing the fares of LRT and MRT riders for long because it could worsen the government's fiscal crisis.

An official of a private railway operator who requested anonymity said the removal of the subsidy would push the average fare to P45.

Boncodin said President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had instructed the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) to rush the processing and implementation of the 5-km extension of the MRT.

The $200-million extension will add three stations (Roosevelt, Balintawak and Monumento) to MRT 3 and connect it to the Monumento terminal of LRT that will finally put in place an interconnection of all urban railway projects in Metro Manila, including MRT 2 and MRT 4.

DOTC Secretary Leandro Mendoza said he was confident the government would resolve all legal issues that has delayed the project, which was approved by the National Economic and Development Board two years ago.

The main issue is whether the private developer of MRT 3, Metro Rail Transit Corp., has the right to build the extension based on its supplemental agreement for its original project or whether it should be placed on the auction block.

A DOTC briefing report stated that the Department of Justice had recommended that MRTC's unsolicited proposal be subjected to a price test or Swiss challenge.

Man gets kick out of Pasay City robbery

By Nancy C. Carvajal

HE PREYED on the wrong victim.

A kick in the face was what holdup suspect Jasper Sistoso got when he tried to rob Richard Olitres, who turned out to be a karate expert.

Police said the suspect poked a knife at Olitres along Angeles Street, Pasay City, and tried to get the bag he was carrying.

Olitres did not let go of his bag and instead gave Sistoso a kick in the face.

According to PO2 Marianito Agas, the suspect could have chosen Olitres because the bag he was carrying looks full and seemed to contain valuables.

Olitres, according to the police is 5'5" tall, medium built, but has the physique of a person you would not want to mess with.

Officer on case PO2 Marianito Agas said the victim is a karate expert and works for a security agency. He also trains security guards on martial arts and gives self-defense lessons.

Suspect gets death for couple's slay

By Tarra V. Quismundo

EMOTIONS ran high as joyful embraces were exchanged and anguished cries filled a Manila court room yesterday when a judge sentenced to death a man accused of robbing and killing a couple in Malate, Manila, 10 years ago.

Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 11 Judge Luis Arranz, the fifth judge to handle the case, handed down the maximum penalty for Emmanuel Paulo, who had faced robbery in band with multiple homicide and serious physical injuries charges.

The Pampanga native was identified by prosecution witnesses as among five armed men who had participated in the crime.

Taiwanese national Chun Shien Chang, then 27, and his wife of one year, Leonora Bedana, then 22, were found dead in their home on Unit 404 TSE and Sons Building, Mabini Street in Malate on May 7, 1994.

Police found the couple, their hands and feet bound with masking tape, blindfolded and gagged, with multiple stab wounds.

The two also reportedly lost an undetermined amount of jewelry and other belongings.

Cherry Torres and Melrose Chicano, friends of the couple who happened to be visiting that day, were also stabbed by the suspects, but they lived to tell what they saw between 12 noon and early evening of May 7.

When the 26-page decision was read, the packed court room was overwhelmed by cries and screams from both the Bedana and Paulo families.

"My son is not to blame," repeatedly said Clarita Paulo, mother of the accused. She had testified that Emmanuel was in their house in Lubao, Pampanga when the murders took place.

But for the Bedanas, Paulo's conviction was only the beginning of a long-drawn search for justice.

That would end with the arrest of four other suspects still at large, they said.

TEARS and jubilation mix in the sala of Manila Judge Luis Arranz after he handed down the guilty verdict and a death sentence to Emmanuel Paulo (in white shirt, left), who is comforted by relatives. In the background are the relatives of murder victim Leonora Bedaña. ERIK ARAZAS

3 arrested, probed for Rizal heists

By Luige A. del Puerto

CRIMES solved?

Police in Marikina City arrested at dawn yesterday three men whom they believe are responsible for a series of bank robberies and burglaries in eastern Metro Manila and Rizal.

Fortunato Dilima, 54; Benjis Santosan, 37; and Reynaldo de los Reyes, 34, all natives of Mindoro, were caught in the act of cutting the chains of a sewing machine store.

"We believe they were the ones who robbed several establishments in eastern Metro Manila and Rizal," said Sr. Supt. Felipe Rojas, Marikina police chief.

They yielded two oxygen tanks, an acetylene gun, a bolt cutter, a steel bar, a claw and six 38-caliber bullets.

Police said the suspects either carried no guns or they managed to dispose of them before they were apprehended about 4:30 a.m. outside Light Speed Trading Phils.

They are being eyed in break-ins at three banks and a computer shop.

Police seized from them a stolen Mitsubishi L300 van (UEM 547). It was registered to Dennis Mate of Muntinlupa City.

Metro cops form special teams vs cell phone thieves

By Leila B. Salaverria and Margaux C. Ortiz

METRO Manila policemen have been directed to create special teams that would go after cell phone thieves in the wake of the growing number of killings and other crimes triggered by cell phone robberies. *(See related story on page A1.)*

National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon said the teams would be composed of intelligence or undercover policemen, and beat patrol operatives who pound the streets of a town or city to provide police visibility.

At the same time, Manila policemen were also directed to inspect stores that sell second-hand cell phones as a deterrent to the re-sale of stolen cell phones.

Razon, however, said the police would not confiscate second hand cell phones sold unless there is proof that these had been stolen. Instead, policemen, invoking their inspection powers, should ask store owners to show their license to operate, sales receipts, and other pertinent documents regarding their business.

"At the moment, police inspections are only meant to serve as a deterrent," he said.

Meanwhile, despite a regulation banning the use of cell phones while driving in Metro Manila, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority cited "negligible apprehensions" of violators since the regulation was passed in 1997.

Records of the Makati Traffic Enforcement Unit, for example, showed that only two violators were caught in July and August this year.

The regulation said the use of cell phones while driving could be a potential cause of road accidents.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios attributed the low number to the enforcers' difficulty to catch fast-moving vehicles.

Most violators were private vehicle owners who used tinted cars and plied inner or express lanes.

"It was hard for our enforcers to see if the motorists were using cell phones inside their cars," Vergel de Dios said, adding that it was also difficult for traffic aides without motorcycle units to go after the violators.

Traffic Enforcement Group chief Senior Supt. Philmore Balmaceda agreed that catching cell phone users on the road was not an easy job for traffic policemen as well.

"It is difficult to prove that the violator was using a cell phone unless the vehicle is stationary or our personnel have cameras with them," he said.

A shameless congressman

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE HOUSE of Representatives is probably a place where shameless politicians abound. And the most shameless of them all is Rep. Antonio Diaz of Zambales.

He's so shameless that if all members of Congress were made to undergo a neuro psychiatric exam he would fail.

Diaz recently announced his resignation because he said he was not named one of the House deputy speakers, and because he had not obtained his pork barrel funds. And then he took back his resignation, saying he was thinking of his constituents.

In my journalistic career, including more than a decade of being a radio TV talk show host, I've heard all kinds of stupid reasons from people who did idiotic things. Diaz's reason for resigning his elective post beats them all.

Diaz's dumbness is unbelievable. But dumber than him are his constituents in Zambales who elected him. He and his constituents deserve each other.

Just because the world's greatest salesman, Speaker Jose de Venecia, promised him the deputy speakership and the promise was not fulfilled, he would resign? What is there in the deputy speakership that a guy would resign his elective position if he didn't get it?

I can understand why Diaz would resign because he failed to obtain pork barrel funds. In his puny mind, the "Furusato congressman" probably thinks that pork barrel and legislation are synonymous.

Diaz most probably suffers from a viral infection that affects the brain from eating too much sashimi (Japanese appetizer made of raw fish) at the expensive Furusato Restaurant. Imagine, according to a Senate blue ribbon committee report, in a four-month period in 1993, he ate 307 times at the Japanese restaurant!

And to top it all, he used other people's names, saying they were with him, so he could charge his eating spree to his representation expenses. For example, the gourmand congressman said he dined with Deo Macalma at the Japanese restaurant but the radio commentator denied this.

Diaz's biggest sin was not stuffing himself at the expense of the taxpayers but in his broadside in a privilege speech against well-known columnist Louie Beltran. Beltran could no longer defend himself from Furusato San because he was already dead.

Beltran had criticized Diaz's eating habits.

***

Many citizens were incredulous over reports that congressmen had renounced their pork barrel. They were right.

The House of Representatives no longer calls it pork barrel. Congressmen and women call it "line-item budgeting." Under this setup, legislators will identify the projects in their constituencies.

So, *tuloy ang ligaya*.

***

I remember that at the wake of my close friend, Danny Hernandez, who died in a taxi holdup a couple of years ago, some politicians promised scholarships for his children.

As usual, the promise was never fulfilled.

People who believe politicians' promises are naive, to say the least.

LADY LEGISLATORS TAKE OATH

The Lady Legislators of the 13th Congress, headed by Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia A. Villar, take their oath of office before House Speaker Jose De Venecia at the House of Representatives. The group, composed of 36 congresswomen from all over the archipelago, vows to promote the welfare of the country's neglected sectors, particularly the women, elderly, and the youth sectors. The new set of officers include: vice president for Luzon Rep. Reylina Nicolas; vice president for Visayas Rep. Trinidad Apostol; vice president for Mindanao Rep. Corazon Malanyaon; secretary Rep. Belma Cabilao; assistant secretary Rep. Anna Theresia Hontiveros-Baraquel; treasurer Rep. Lorna Silverio, auditor Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza, PRO Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales and muses Rep. Emmylou Taliño-Santos, Rep. Remedios Petilla and Rep. Victoria Reyes.

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ANTI-ILLEGAL DRUGS DRIVE BOOST

DOTC to go after erring drug test labs

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Telecommunications (DOTC) yesterday warned owners of drug testing centers that it would revoke their accreditation if they were found to have accepted bribes in exchange for issuing clearance certificates to applicants using prohibited drugs.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza also ordered the Land Transportation Office to ensure the integrity of the government's drug-testing system for drivers by closely monitoring the operations of the test centers.

At the same time, he urged train drivers of the Philippine National Railways, Light Rail Transit and Metro Rail Transit, as well as seafarers and airline employees to submit themselves to voluntary drug testing.

Mendoza said the DOTC, together with the Dangerous Drugs Board, would form a team that would go after drug testing centers suspected of participating in—instead of discouraging—criminal activities.

Mendoza, former Philippine National Police chief, pointed to reports that some drug testing centers were involved in illegal activities.

The DOTC chief was particularly dismayed by a television news report in Cebu that showed an applicant for a driver's license was able to get a drug test certificate after he had assumed the identity of a dead person.

"Drug testing centers that sell fraudulent results should be immediately stripped of their accreditation," Mendoza said. "They should also be prosecuted in court for all applicable criminal offenses in support of the government's anti-illegal drugs campaign."

Earlier this year, Mendoza, together with the heads of the interior, health and justice departments, signed a memorandum for the implementation of a program called "Manibela Kontra Droga (Makondroga)," an anti-illegal drugs campaign of the government in the transport sector. Mendoza said the MOU formalized the common vision of government and private anti-illegal drugs organizations to cleanse the transport sector of drug dependents to prevent drug-related crimes on thoroughfares, airports, seaports and train stations.

Many drivers of public utility vehicles have resorted to taking drugs to keep them awake during extended trips. Just last week, a bus driver and two conductors were arrested by the police while sniffing shabu, an illegal drug.

The LTO and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board should strengthen their antidrug campaigns to fight the illegal drugs menace, Mendoza added.

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Road mishaps kill 5 in Metro

By Tina G. Santos

FIVE people were killed and three others were seriously hurt in separate vehicular accidents in Navotas and Valenzuela City Tuesday night.

Police identified the fatalities as Jaime Paredes Sr., 56, a jeepney driver, his live-in partner Mila Corales, 52, Mary Jane Villaflor, 30, all of San Jose, Navotas, a certain Jeric Pangilinan, and a still unidentified woman, about 18 to 20 years old.

Those injured were pedicab driver Charlie Timog, 44, of Maypajo, Caloocan City; his passenger Racquel dela Cruz, 23, of Balut, Tondo, Manila, and one Arnel Tuazon.

Paredes, Corales, Villaflor, and the unidentified woman were in a passenger jeepney that was rammed by a truck head along H. Lopez Boulevard in Navotas at about 8:30 p.m.

Racing on the highway

The truck head, which is used to pull trailers carrying container vans, was reportedly racing with another truck head when it went to the opposite lane and collided with the jeepney.

The truck head also hit the pedicab driven by Timog.

Police said its driver drove on after the incident. The truck is reportedly owned by KTC Trucking.

In a separate incident, two black scooters, each driven by Pangilinan and Tuazon, were racing along MacArthur Highway in Karuhatan, Valenzuela, when they were hit by a Monumento-bound Ford Fiera van. Pangilinan died in the incident.

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Talamak na nakawan ng cellphone: Ano'ng solusyon?

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GOLF: LPGA John Q. Hammond Hotel Classic; 2 p.m. (r); ESPN—Take another look at the final round.

BASKETBALL: NBA Greatest Games—Kings vs Jazz, Game 5, 1999 Western First Round; 8:30 a.m. (r-6 p.m.); Solar Sports—It's the changing of the guard as Sacramento eliminates Utah.

NBA Greatest Games—Blazers vs Spurs, Game 2, 1999 Western Finals; 11 a.m. (r- 10 p.m.); Solar Sports—San Antonio's Sean Elliot buries the game-winning three-pointer.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Perpetual, PCU in finals

GAMES TOMORROW (*Rizal Coliseum*)
4 p.m.—Perpetual vs PCU (Srs Finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

THREE months ago, no one expected the whipping boys last season to battle for this year's NCAA basketball championship crown.

The Philippine Christian U Dolphins and the University of Perpetual Help Altas yesterday completed one of the greatest turnarounds in the league as the 2003 doormats arranged a best-of-three series for the championship starting tomorrow at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Dolphins relied on Robert Sanz, who unloaded his team's final 10 points to oust the defending champion Letran Knights, 85-80, in overtime in their playoff for the second title berth.

"I'm relieved. Letran is very tough," said coach Loreto Tolentino, whose Dolphins are in the finals for the first time since joining the league in 1996.

And it will be the University of Perpetual Help Altas, PCU's fellow cellar dweller last year, who will be battling them on Friday to kick off the best-of-three championship series.

Senior Marcel Cuenco delivered his best performance of the season as the Altas repulsed the San Beda Lions, 58-56, and secured their first finals appearance in 15 years.

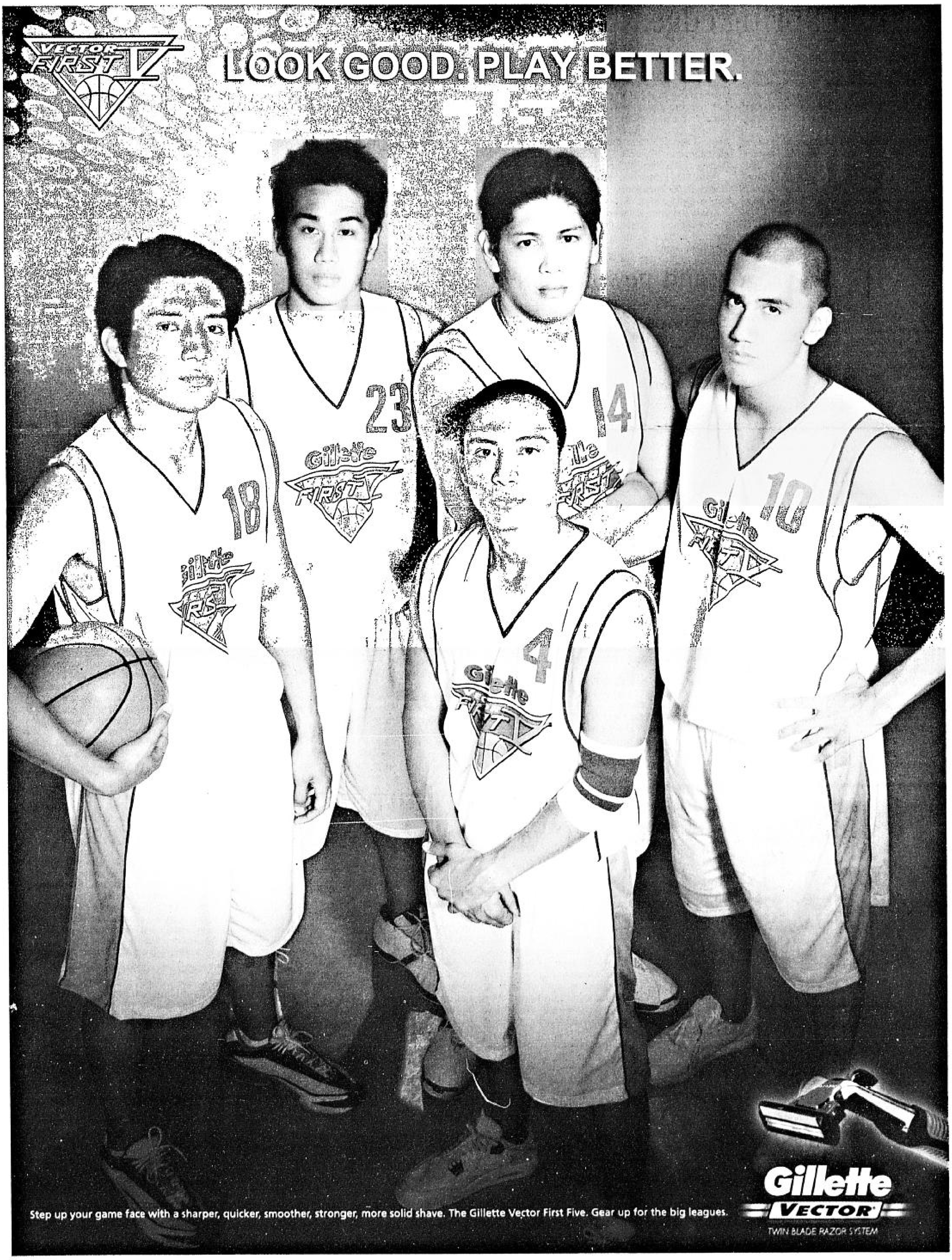
"It was all about heart. We were down by four in the final minutes but I told them *magtiyaga lang* (to be patient)," said coach Bai Cristobal.

Cuenco shot 10 of his 20 points in the final quarter and Perpetual got a key break when Lion Arjun Cordero blew a wide-open layup that could have sent the game into overtime.

The 22-year-old Sanz, who scored a game-high 19 points, sparked a 9-4 run in the extension period for an 80-76 PCU lead in the final minute. Ronjay Enrile pulled Letran within two, 82-80, in

PERPETUAL/ A23

PERPETUAL Help's Dominador Javier celebrates after the Altas knock out the San Beda Red Lions. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO



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RP CAGERS UNDERGO MILITARY TRAINING
The RP Cebuana Lhuillier national men's basketball team recently underwent an overnight boot camp and teambuilding training at Sangley Point in Cavite with the National Special Warfare Group as part of the team's physical training. The Nationals are shown doing the tire exercise leg of the obstacle course.

Tams seek final slot vs Warriors

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
2 p.m.—UST vs La Salle (Jrs)
4 p.m.—UE vs FEU (Srs)

ODDS favor the Far Eastern Tamaraws.

But FEU coach Koy Banal dismisses the idea when his defending champion Tamaraws clash with the youthful University of the East Warriors in the semifinals of the UAAP senior basketball tournament today at the Philsports Arena.

As the top team in the eliminations, the Tamaraws only have to prevail in the 4 p.m. match to reach the finals for the second straight year.

"Coach Dindo (Pumaren) has done a wonderful job at UE. At the start, many doubted his team. But he erased all that. They're ready going into the Final Four. They have that aggressiveness and they have nothing to lose," said Banal.

But UE's feisty attitude can easily be handled by FEU's stellar lineup.

The Tamaraws, who topped the eliminations with an 11-3 record, are led by No. 1 MVP candidate Arwind Santos (13.5 points per game, 10.3 rebounds per game) and point guard Dennis Miranda (11.6 ppg, 4.6 assists per game).

And they also count on players who were part of FEU's championship run last year like RJ Rizada, Don Yabut, Mark Isip and Jeff Chan.

A UE win is not discounted however after the Warriors defied the experts by finishing fourth with an 8-6 slate.

"Whatever happens, we got eight wins and it's already a good achievement for us," said rookie coach Dindo Pumaren. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Laguna Spring edges Tribu

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna Spring nipped Tribu Sugbu (Cebu Tribes) in overtime, 76-75, Tuesday to claim the first semifinal slot in the North division of the NBC (National Basketball Conference) national championship at the RECS Complex here.

With Nani Epondulan going scoreless, big man Chris Corbin stepped up and powered the Spring of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Laguna Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro to a revenge win over the Cebuanos, who edged them 82-80 in double overtime in their first meeting at the Cebu Coliseum.

The Tribes were hampered by the loss of main man Jojo Tangkay, who re-injured his left knee early in the first quarter.

"The boys are finally playing as one unit," said Spring playing coach Mike Buendia. "Chris (Corbin) had a breakout game, and the other guys ably backed him up."

It was the eighth win in 13 games for Spring in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Spring Cooking Oil, PCSO, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Cebu Ferries, Air Philippines, Supercat, Skygo Motorcycles, Trans-Asia, Accel and Molten.

Dante Elim's triple sent the game into overtime at 66-66. Then Danny Capobres went to work to give Spring a 75-70 advantage.

Action continues today with the Cebuanos, still the league's top team at 10-3, facing the Batangas 29ers at 6 p.m. at the Lipa Cultural Covention Center.

POC PRESIDENCY

Peping's bid gets FG nod

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WITH AN indirect endorsement coming from First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, equestrian president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday said he would take on the challenge of breathing new life to Philippine sports as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Cojuangco said he would soon come out with his platform to revive RP sports in the wake of the recent Olympic misadventure in Athens where the Philippines again failed to win a medal.

"There's one thing sure, that there will be no turning back for me. I am taking this challenge, not by personalities but by the task of working for Philippine sports," said Cojuangco. "It's time to do something for sports, we are so behind (in sports development)."

Cojuangco's POC bid got a big boost from Mr. Arroyo, who stopped short of campaigning for him after inducting yesterday the officials of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association led by president Go Teng Kok at the Century Park Sheraton.

"Maybe, it would take a politician to finally unite Philippine sports," said Arroyo in his brief post-induction remark, obviously referring to Cojuangco, a former Tarlac congressman.

Arroyo added that the country will "host the 2005 Southeast Asian Games whether we like it or not" even as he assured the government can raise P700 million for the biennial event. Cojuangco added that he has received an offer from a Canadian firm to build a 10,500-seater stadium for the 2005 Games.

A brand-new La Salle

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THEY KEPT driving, and that's what made the Green Archers of La Salle very much superior over the Blue Eagles of Ateneo two days back.

This particular Tuesday, La Salle was doing what it knows best: pierce the lanes. Gerwin Gaco, Joseph Yeo, Mark Cardona, Mark Lester Benitez, everybody was into it.

Slash the paint.

Crash the baseline.

Barrel from the key.

For La Salle, that's the way to do it: Drive for the basket like the speed demons of Formula 1.

Oh, yes, there was one more. The Archers were hitting fastbreaks at the slightest opportunity.

Who said the fastbreak is passé?

In Athens, America's NBA stars forgot about the fastbreak altogether and they got summarily ousted as Olympic champions. The NBA has been so used to methodology that when its players returned to the Olympiad, they ran smack into something akin to the game but, unfortunately, not anymore to them: the fastbreak.

Franz Pumaren, the extremely talented La Salle coach, is teaching our UAAP coaches a lesson by going back to a basic tenet of the game. Fastbreaks, when executed properly, can be deadlier than triples.

This particular Tuesday, La Salle must have scored on a bundle of fastbreaks in beating Ateneo, breaking the spirit of the Eagles.

La Salle's win was its seventh straight, duplicating in the process Ateneo's seven-game streak in the first round.

Now which team appears ready to stash away the UAAP crown?

I'd say La Salle.

Everybody's now saying it: Ateneo had peaked too soon with that 7-0 rout of the opposition in the first round.

Everybody's now saying it: La Salle is just starting to peak.

In their first game, Ateneo rallied from 15 points down to defeat La Salle.

In their return bout, La Salle unleashed a new weapon: Jump the gun on Ateneo with blinding speed from all over. The Archers won running away.

In the playoff for second in this particularly Tuesday, La Salle simply xeroxed its previous game plan to rout Ateneo in a manner as though the Blue Eagles had gone to war like soldiers without a leader.

The score graphically illustrated it: 82 La Salle, 69 Ateneo.

The Eagles were pathetic, to say the least. Save for LA Tenorio and Paolo Bugia, everybody groped for baskets like blind fishermen.

They looked lost almost all throughout.

They seemed unprepared for La Salle's kamikaze attack, had no answer to the Archers' wind-powered, daredevil strategy that defied conventions.

Last year, Ateneo beat La Salle twice in the eliminations. Game 1 was a rout, 82-68. In Game 2, Ateneo won, 98-89.

In their playoff, La Salle stole a 76-72 win in overtime, with Archer Joseph Yeo firing 31 points. Then Ateneo got back at La Salle, 74-68, before losing its crown to Far Eastern University.

This year, the odds now favor La Salle over Ateneo in the semifinals as the Eagles face the formidable job of beating the Archers twice to make it to the finals anew.

For La Salle, it only needs to defeat Ateneo on Sunday to advance.

In the other half of the draw, FEU is heavily favored to clinch the first finals berth today when it battles surprise Final 4 entry University of the East. To stay alive, UE, coached by Franz's younger brother, Dindo, must win to force a knockout.

The UAAP has become so interesting even the possibility of a Pumaren versus Pumaren scenario, remote as it may seem, has gripped the league.

If that should happen, it'd be a repeat of last year's Banal versus Banal in the UAAP Finals, with Koy Banal of FEU winning over Joel Banal of Ateneo.

In any ball game, anything can happen. Remember America in Athens.

As for Ateneo, well, it's been happening. It is only now that the loss of Larry Fonacier, the chief Eagle, due to injury early in the tournament has started to tell on Ateneo.

Still and all, if Ateneo beats La Salle on Sunday, it'd be a new script altogether.

But for that to happen, Ateneo has to find first the antidote to La Salle's sudden penchant for the run-and-gun, the almost forgotten weapon.

Otherwise, the Eagles could kiss their title hopes goodbye on Sunday.

***

FASTBREAK. The Uwak Ladies Club of Wack Wack will hold its third annual tournament today. Selda Santos, a respected leader of the club, has made sure the day will be filled with thrill and drama. She said it'd be a day of fun, too, what with the many prizes and giveaways that await the participants. All the best, Selda!

SPORTSWATCH

4 title bouts to mark Papa's b-day

FOUR World Boxing Foundation championship bouts will be held on Sept. 25 at the Elorde ballroom in Parañaque to mark the 100th birth anniversary of Lope "Papa" Sarreal, the acknowledged Grand Old Man of Philippine Boxing. Promoter Gabriel "Bebot" Elorde Jr., grandson of the late promoter-matchmaker, announced yesterday that the event, dubbed as "WBF Showdown," will have World Boxing Foundation president Mick Croucher of Australia as a special guest. Sarreal, who died nine years ago, is credited for producing 22 world champions, including his well-loved son-in-law, Flash Elorde. One of the main fights features Filipino Sukarno Banjao, WBF No. 10, against Indonesia's Yongki Afrizal, WBF No. 8, for the vacant flyweight throne. Another match-up pits Filipino Rey Pelonia, WBF No. 10, against Indon Ferri Wirawan, WBF No. 9, for the welterweight title. The other title fights will feature all-Filipino clashes for the super flyweight and minimumweight titles. Mark Sales and Celso Danggod trade punches for the super fly crown, while Benjie Sorolla takes on Rey Orais for the minimumweight tiara. ***Salven Lagumbay, Contributor***

Forest Hills 5th Chairman's Cup

A BIGGER field, faster pace of play, and fabulous raffle prizes are in the offing as the 5th Chairman's Cup starts today at the Forest Hills Golf and Country Club in Antipolo City. Sun Cellular and Golforce Inc. are co-sponsoring the annual affair, which has attracted more than 400 players and guests and will be played at the par-71 Jack Nicklaus-designed course. Shotgun tee-off starts at 8 a.m. Club chair lawyer Ferdinand Santos and other club directors and officers will hit the ceremonial balls with special guests Rizal Gov. Casimiro "Ito" Ynares and Antipolo City Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan. The event stakes a brand-new Mitsubishi Lancer 1.6 GLX, a Wilson golf set and P100,000 as hole-in-one prizes.

Mariano skipping national chessfest

GRANDMASTER Nelson Mariano II, citing "unjust and unfair policies" of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, yesterday announced that he would not be competing in the national chess championships scheduled to open on Saturday in Tagaytay City. "Because of unjust and unfair policies (of the NCFP), there is no use of playing when there is no level playing field," said the 29-year-old Mariano, who became the country's fifth and latest grandmaster when he earned his third and final GM norm in the Asean Chess Masters Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, last July. The NCFP announced recently it planned to seed International Mark Paragua, who is competing in Europe to complete his GM norm, to the 36th World Chess Olympiad starting Oct. 13 in Majorca, Spain.

UM, CEU try to forge title clash

ONE game at a time. That's the mantra University of Manila, already with the longest winning streak in local collegiate basketball history, will follow when it faces Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasay today for a finals berth in the National Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu)at the Rizal Coliseum. The Hawks, who have won 69 straight games since the league began in 2001, won't take chances against the Eagles, who are expected to go all out to avenge an 86-72 loss in Game 1 of their best-of-three Final Four encounter. Later in the day, St. Clare College of Caloocan will try to bounce back and square its own series with Game 1 tormentor Centro Escolar University at the UM Gym. UM will bank on Jovit Gomez from Bulan, Sorsogon, who is averaging 19 points per game, Ryan Regalado from Virac, Catanduanes, who averages 16 points per game, and 6-2 small forward Gener Bernados, of Morong, Bataan. UM president and lawyer Ernesto delos Santos expressed confidence that the Hawks will eventually score a sweep in clinching their fourth straight title. ***Marc Anthony Reyes***

Rotary badminton tourney slated

THE SECOND Rotary International District 3830 badminton tournament will be held on Sept. 18 and 19 at the Yonex Philippines Badminton Center. Rotarians, family members and Rotaractors from the more than 70 Rotary Clubs that comprise the district are expected to compete in this tournament with RC Makati Metro as host club and SMART Communications Inc. as major sponsor.

IOC PRESIDENT BRIEFING: International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge (right) talks with ASTC president Yu Kyung Sung and Triathlon Association of the Philippines president Tom Carrasco (left) during the recent Athens Olympics.

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Former star returns to RP women's team

A VETERAN football player known for her heroics six years ago returns to the fold of the country's national team to participate in the Asean Football Federation's 2004 Women's Championship next month.

Karem Esteva, who last starred for the national squad in the 1998 Asian Women's Championships, is expected to arrive on Sept. 24 to rejoin the national squad after having migrated to New York, where she picked up a couple of coaching chores.

Esteva was named one of the top players in that 1998 meet.

RP women's team manager Mari Martinez has expressed his satisfaction over the development, saying Esteva will be a big boost to the team that will compete in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

Esteva is the daughter of former football standout Raffy Esteva—who starred for the La Salle and Meralco champion squads in the 1970s.

She has been the coach the past two years of the fifth and sixth grade coed teams of the Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School, where she is a second grade teacher.

Esteva currently plays in an adult men's league called "Urban Soccer" in New York City where she lives.

The RP women's team is presently training at the Philsports pitch with head coach Marlon Maro.

Paragua shares lead

FILIPINO International Master Mark Paragua beat Russian GM Andrey Nikitin in the sixth round and then drew with IM Nikolay Oglobin to gain a piece of the lead in the 2nd Alushta GM Tournament in Alushta, Ukraine. Paragua pushed his total to 5.0 points, the same output of Russian IMs Sergey Vokarev and Alexsander Obukhov, and moved closer to the norm that would earn him his grandmaster title. A player needs to score at least 11 points in this Category IX event to obtain a GM result.

Bibat still up in Singapore

Juvic paces qualifiers

By Musong R. Castillo

MICHAEL Bibat kept his poise despite two weather delays and carded a two-under-par 70 yesterday to keep the overall lead after 36 holes of the Singapore Amateur golf championship at the tough Serapong layout of the Sentosa golf club.

The 20-year-old, 6-foot-2 rookie in the Putra Cup men's team shot nines of 35-35 and now has a 136 total, seven strokes ahead of Singaporean Choo Tze Huang as even as his teammate Boyet Saragoza dropped out of second after an 82.

Saragoza, whose 72 on Tuesday put him in second place, gave back eight shots in the last five holes, but the Philippines still leads in the team event after Tommy Manotoc carded a 74.

The team championship ends today in the island course battered by heavy rains and playing its toughest with winds howling from all over.

Meanwhile, in the evaluation series for the RP World Amateur team, Juvic Pagunsan all but wrapped up the first of three slots to Puerto Rico after a 65 at Aguinaldo boosted him way out front with just 36 holes to go.

The 26-year-old RP No. 1 turned in a 33-32 card and now has a 417 total after six rounds, 11-under, and 16 strokes clear of new second placer Jun Bernis, who tallied a level 68 at the short military course.

Bibat, whose scores in Singapore count in the NGAP evaluation series here, is actually running second behind Pagunsan with a 430 total.

PBL holds rookie camp

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball League will hold a one-day aspirants camp on Sept. 29 at the Makati Coliseum, the league office announced yesterday.

The camp will serve as a preview of the incoming players who will join the rookie draft on Oct. 1

"There are plenty of fine players in the UAAP, NCAA and other collegiate leagues in Metro Manila right now so I'm certain we can discover a new crop of exciting players," said PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad. "I'm also hoping that some players from Visayas and Mindanao will show up this time and be part of the league."

Deadline for the submission of Draft forms will be on Sept. 28, before 12 noon.

For more details, contact Butch Maniego or Lani Sagayap at 8976383 or 8956483.

Perpetual PCU gain finals

From page A21

the last 25 seconds, but Sanz kept his composure at the line, sinking three of his four free throws.

Letran could have won it in regulation, but Aaron Aban and Enrile split their charities in the final seconds to pave the way for a 71-71 tie.

The San Beda Cubs earlier took the first finals slot in junior play after the defending champions trounced the La Salle Greenies, 79-71.

The scores:

Second game (Srs)

PERPETUAL 58—Cuenco 20, Misa 8, Javier 8, Apor 7, Bauzon 5, Refuerzo 5, Joe 3, Bamson 2, Mendoza 0.

SAN BEDA 56—Bombeo 11, Paterno 10, Aljamal 8, Cruz 7, Cordero 6, Bughao 6, Arbole 4, Hudencial 2, Angeles 2, Soriano 0, Weber 0, Ong 0.

Quarters: 15-19, 33-28, 46-44, 58-56.

Third game (Srs)

PCU 85—Sanz 19, Garrido 18, Castro 16, Retaga 9, Espinas 7, Belga 7, Solis 4, Amparado 3, Cecilia 2, Santos 0, Salansang 0, Bartolome 0, Cunanan 0, Gementiza 0.

LETRAN 80—Bautista 15, Aban 15, Andaya 13, Enrile 12, Aldave 9, Piñera 5, Rodriguez 4, Alcaraz 4, Mondragon 2, Realista 0, Anabo 0.

Quarters: 24-21, 49-48, 65-58, 71-71, 85-80.

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2:15/4:25/6:35/
8:45/10:25 LFS/
11:00 LMF/12:40 END

2
EXORCIST:
THE BEGINNING
11:00 FS/11:20 MF/
1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/
10:35 LFS/11:00
LMF/12:55 END

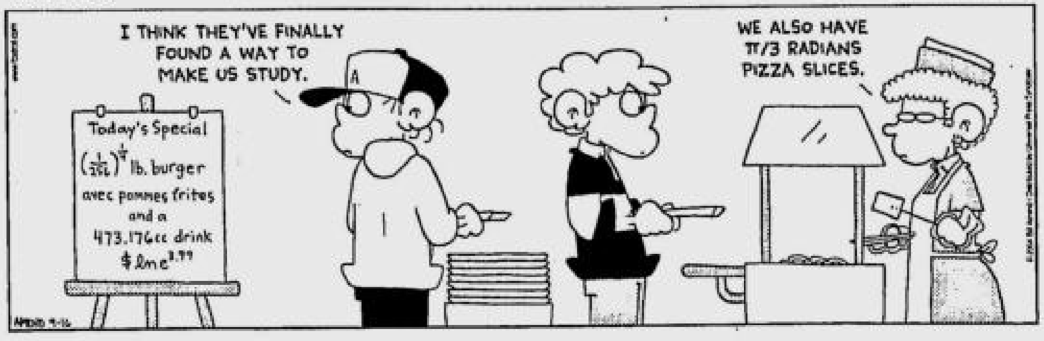
For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
LATE NIGHT SCREENING
DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

SM CINEMA
WATCH N' WIN
Buy 1 movie ticket to get 1 raffle stub
Catch the 3 Day Sale at SM Cinemas
Get a chance to bring home a Digital Camera PLUS loads of movie passes to be given away.

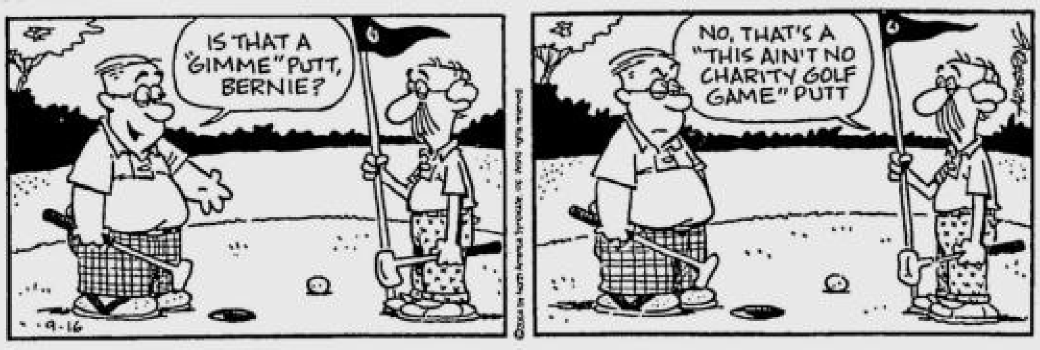
PROMO PERIOD:
SEPTEMBER 17,18,19
Participating Branches:
SM City Sta. Mesa • Sucat • Dasma • Lucena
Kodak EasyShare

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

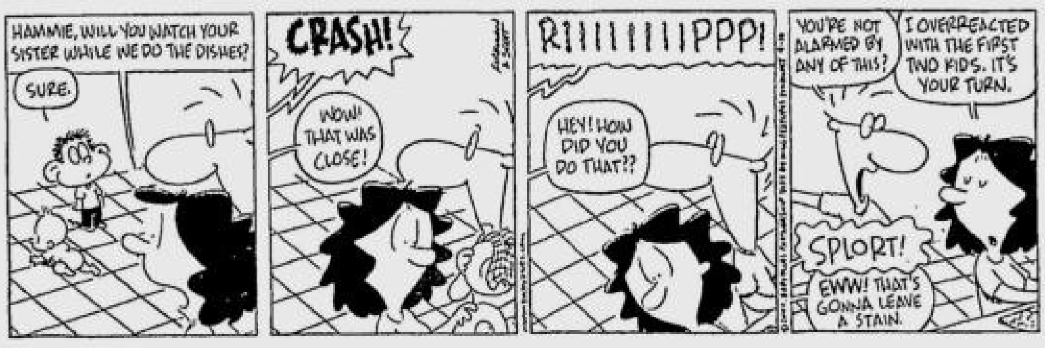
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


Today's Special
(1/256)^(1/4) lb. burger
avec pommes frites
and a
473.176cc drink
$ ln e^3.99
I THINK THEY'VE FINALLY FOUND A WAY TO MAKE US STUDY.
WE ALSO HAVE π/3 RADIANS PIZZA SLICES.
AMEND 9-16

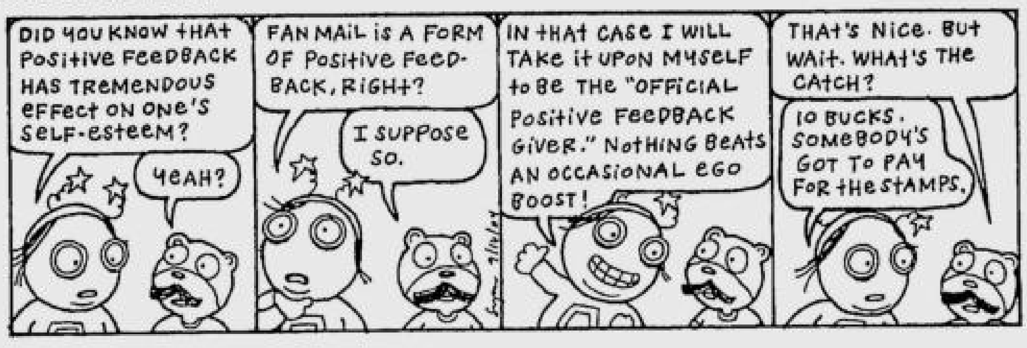
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


IS THAT A "GIMME" PUTT, BERNIE?
NO, THAT'S A "THIS AIN'T NO CHARITY GOLF GAME" PUTT
9-16

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


HAMMIE, WILL YOU WATCH YOUR SISTER WHILE WE DO THE DISHES?
SURE.
CRASH!
WOW! THAT WAS CLOSE!
RIIIIIIIIPPP!
HEY! HOW DID YOU DO THAT??
YOU'RE NOT ALARMED BY ANY OF THIS?
I OVERREACTED WITH THE FIRST TWO KIDS. IT'S YOUR TURN.
SPLORT!
EWW! THAT'S GONNA LEAVE A STAIN.

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DID YOU KNOW THAT POSITIVE FEEDBACK HAS TREMENDOUS EFFECT ON ONE'S SELF-ESTEEM?
YEAH?
FAN MAIL IS A FORM OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK, RIGHT?
I SUPPOSE SO.
IN THAT CASE I WILL TAKE IT UPON MYSELF TO BE THE "OFFICIAL POSITIVE FEEDBACK GIVER." NOTHING BEATS AN OCCASIONAL EGO BOOST!
THAT'S NICE. BUT WAIT. WHAT'S THE CATCH?
10 BUCKS. SOMEBODY'S GOT TO PAY FOR THE STAMPS.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a kind, generous person. People are lucky to know you. You are patient and ambitious (a rare combination). You like to take risks, because you need to chase your dreams. You will not let obstacles deter you. It's important to work hard this year to build and construct new things.
Birthdate of: Peter Falk, actor; Molly Shannon, actress; B.B. King, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You can make very sensible, practical decisions at work today. Trust your judgment. Discussions with older, more experienced people also go very well.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might have an opportunity to give some serious guidance to children or a younger person today. Alternatively, you might make long-range plans concerning children.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have good long-range ideas about using the financial resources available to you for your family and your home. Discuss practical arrangements with family members.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your thinking is grounded in a practical way. You see what needs to be done now and in the future, you're not afraid to tackle the job. You're realistic and in touch with common sense.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good day to figure out your finances and project what you can achieve in the long run. Your thinking is clear, steady and detail-oriented. You won't overlook anything.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You have an orderly state of mind today and good self-discipline. That makes this an excellent day for getting things done. Do anything that requires steady concentration.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You don't want to indulge in frivolity or trivial things today. You're willing to work for tomorrow's rewards. (This attitude will pay off!)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an excellent day to seek advice from someone older or more experienced. You might receive guidance about a specific subject or about life in general.

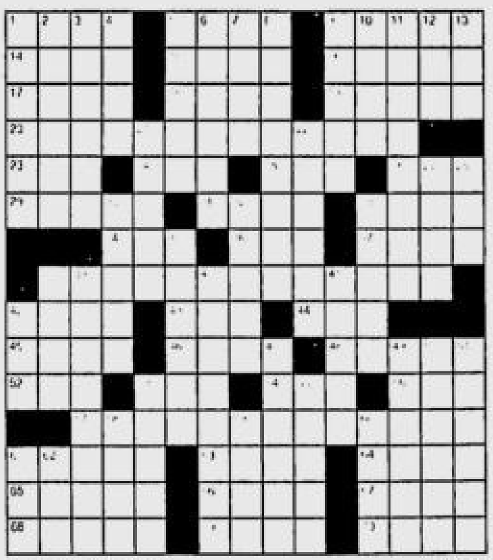
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Think about your long-term career direction. If you know where you want to be in 10 years, or in five years, or in one year, then you will know what to do this week.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might be able to talk to a teacher or an expert in some field today. If you have this opportunity, listen carefully, because you could learn something important and valuable to you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Take care of red-tape details about shared responsibilities for someone or something. Decide how joint property and money will be shared.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You want to have some kind guarantee that a partnership will work. But this kind of guarantee is impossible. Everything about one's future is uncertain, because no one really knows what the future holds.

DAILY CROSSWORD

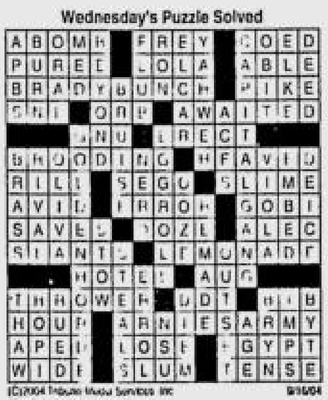


By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
9/16/04

ACROSS
1 Jogging gait
5 __ vincit omnia
9 Freer from risk
14 Novelist Jaffe
15 Easy gait
16 Handbag
17 Robert of "The Sopranos"
18 Pension $$
19 Playwright Clifford
20 Chance event
23 Held first place
24 Narcs' org.
25 Gas: pref.
26 Spacewalk, to NASA
29 Obliterate
31 Zhivago's love
33 Physics particle
34 Kind
36 Dosage amt.
37 Caron title role
38 Chance event
42 Operatic prima donna
43 Wish undone
44 Put on
45 Historic periods
46 Tips
48 Approaches
52 Fish with a long snout
53 Contemptuous interjection
54 Goddess of folly
56 Menlo Park initials
57 Chance event
61 Steeple top
63 Title role for Peter Fonda
64 Geometry calculation
65 Penultimate round
66 Ranked competitor
67 Clenched fingers
68 Bikini blast
69 Author Ferber
70 Ferrara family

DOWN
1 Unimportant thing
2 Caster place
3 New York lake
4 Boat cover
5 De Maupassant novel
6 Human
7 Colorful marine fish
8 Scientific investigation
9 Tracker's trail
10 Auto on the autobahn
11 Wildly excited
12 Boston hrs.
13 Legal thing
21 "Island of the Blue Dolphins" author
22 Came to a halt
27 Mouselike rodent
28 French friend
30 Eliot's Marner
32 Played a part
33 Fashionable shape
35 Seoul resident
38 Latvian capital
39 Worker's extra wages
40 Carnival attraction
41 Gift recipient
42 Diplomat Hammarskjold
47 Lustrous fabric
49 Some arcade games
50 Hardest to find
51 Tranquilize
53 Brittany port
55 Actress Bara
58 Author Leon
59 Ran away
60 Coffee shop
61 987-65-4321 group
62 Favorite

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



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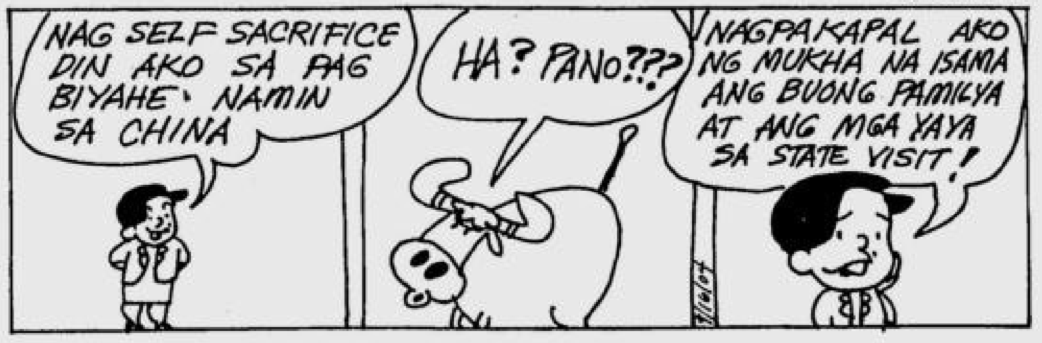
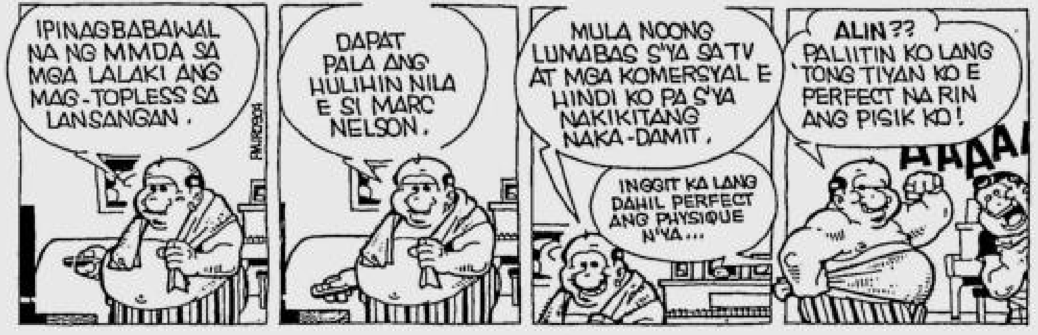
9/15/04

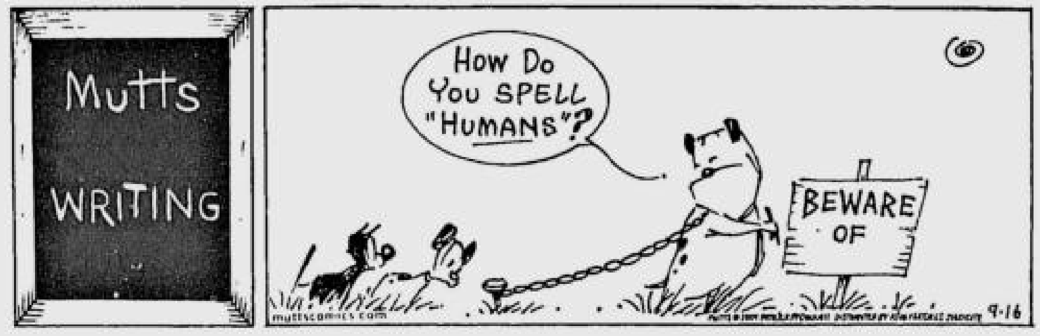
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


NAG SELF SACRIFICE DIN AKO SA PAG BIYAHE NAMIN SA CHINA
HA? PANO???
NAGPAKAPAL AKO NG MUKHA NA ISAMA ANG BUONG PAMILYA AT ANG MGA YAYA SA STATE VISIT!

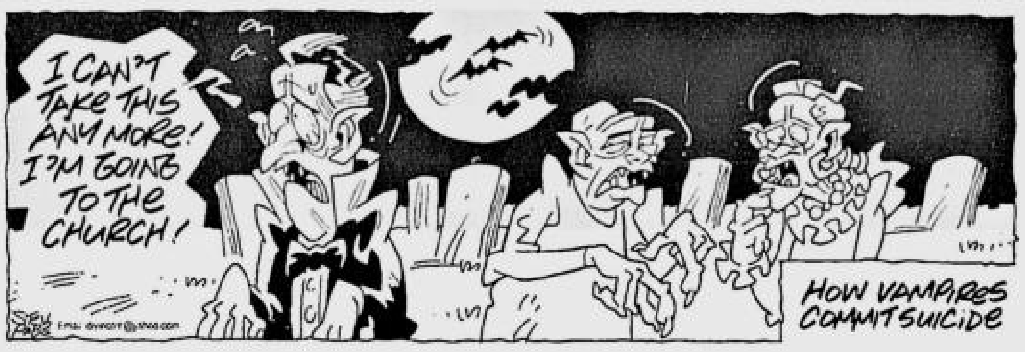
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


IPINAGBABAWAL NA NG MMDA SA MGA LALAKI ANG MAG-TOPLESS SA LANSANGAN.
DAPAT PALA ANG HULIHIN NILA E SI MARC NELSON.
MULA NOONG LUMABAS S'YA SA TV AT MGA KOMERSYAL E HINDI KO PA S'YA NAKIKITANG NAKA-DAMIT.
INGGIT KA LANG DAHIL PERFECT ANG PHYSIQUE N'YA...
ALIN?? PALIITIN KO LANG 'TONG TIYAN KO E PERFECT NA RIN ANG PISIK KO!
AAAA

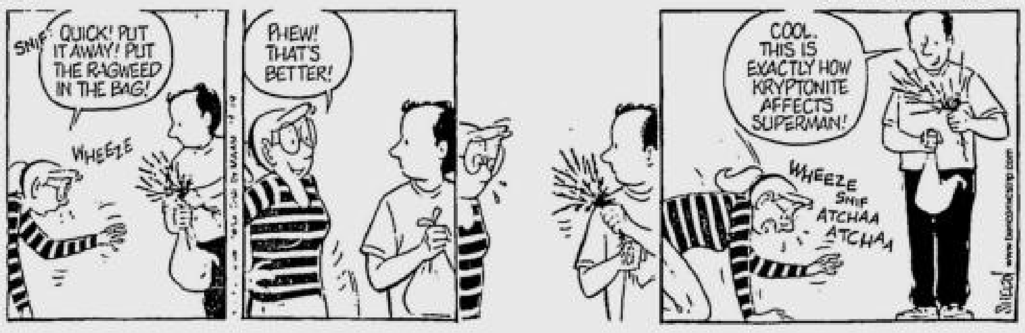
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Mutts
WRITING
How Do You SPELL "HUMANS"?
BEWARE OF
muttscomics.com
9-16

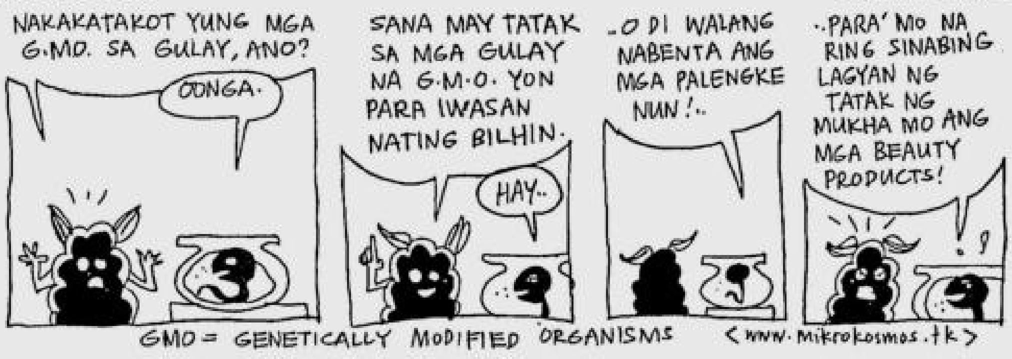
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE! I'M GOING TO THE CHURCH!
HOW VAMPIRES COMMIT SUICIDE

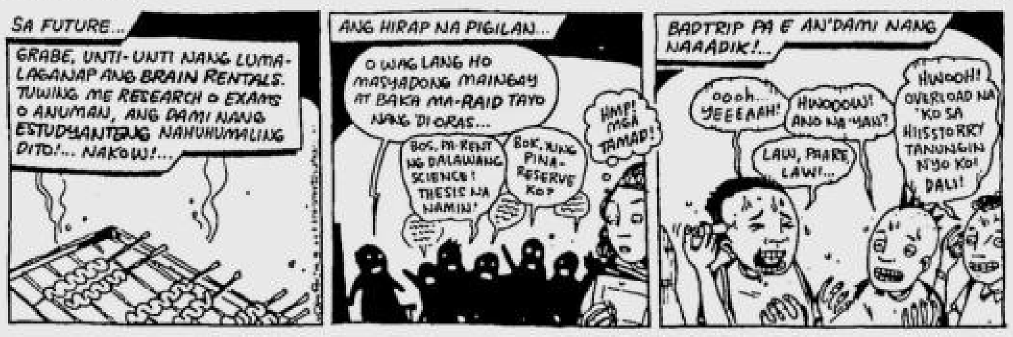
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


SNIF
QUICK! PUT IT AWAY! PUT THE RAGWEED IN THE BAG!
WHEEZE
PHEW! THAT'S BETTER!
COOL. THIS IS EXACTLY HOW KRYPTONITE AFFECTS SUPERMAN!
WHEEZE
SNIF
ATCHAA
ATCHAA

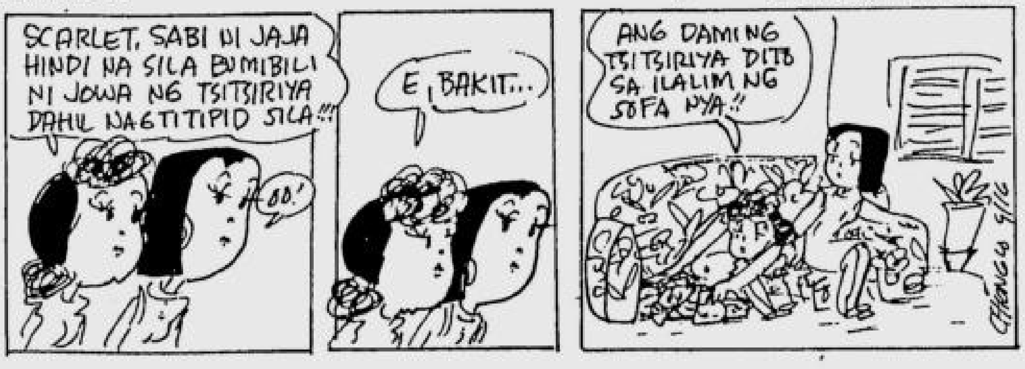
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKAKATAKOT YUNG MGA G.MO. SA GULAY, ANO?
OONGA.
SANA MAY TATAK SA MGA GULAY NA G.M.O. YON PARA IWASAN NATING BILHIN.
HAY..
..O DI WALANG NABENTA ANG MGA PALENGKE NUN!..
..PARA' MO NA RING SINABING LAGYAN NG TATAK NG MUKHA MO ANG MGA BEAUTY PRODUCTS!
GMO = GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS
<www.mikrokosmos.tk>

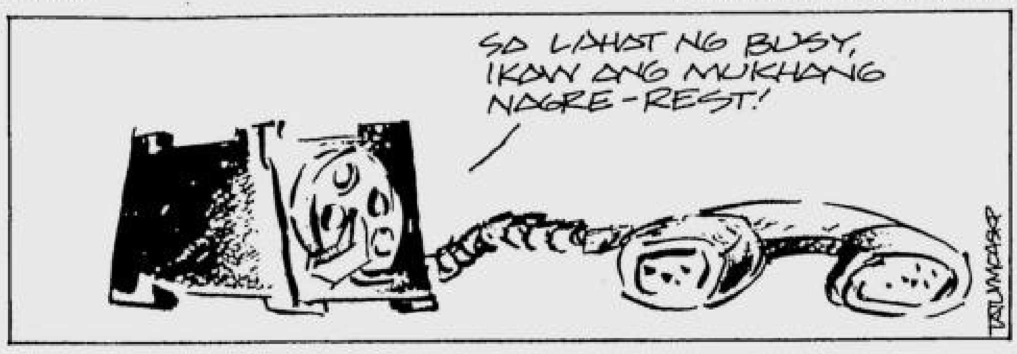
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


SA FUTURE...
GRABE, UNTI-UNTI NANG LUMALAGANAP ANG BRAIN RENTALS. TUWING ME RESEARCH O EXAMS O ANUMAN, ANG DAMI NANG ESTUDYANTENG NAHUHUMALING DITO!... NAKOW!...
ANG HIRAP NA PIGILAN...
O WAG LANG HO MASYADONG MAINGAY AT BAKA MA-RAID TAYO NANG DI ORAS...
BOS, PA-RENT NG DALAWANG SCIENCE! THESIS NA NAMIN!
BOK, 'UNG PINA-RESERVE KO?
HMP! MGA TAMAD!
BADTRIP PA E AN'DAMI NANG NAAADIK!...
OOOH... YEEEAAH!
HWOOOW! ANO NA 'YAN?
LAW, PARE LAW!...
HWOOH! OVERLOAD NA 'KO SA HIISSTORRY TANUNGIN N'YO KO! DALI!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SCARLET, SABI NI JAJA HINDI NA SILA BUMIBILI NI JOWA NG TSITSIRIYA DAHIL NAGTITIPID SILA!!!
OO!
E, BAKIT...
ANG DAMING TSITSIRIYA DITO SA ILALIM NG SOFA NYA!!
CHIONGLO 9/16

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SO LAHAT NG BUSY, IKAW ANG MUKHANG NAGRE-REST!

Aga and Charlene against all odds

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I MISSED the interview with *Tita Nena* (**Amalia Fuentes**) on "S-Files" last Sunday but I heard that it sparked speculations that the marriage of her nephew **Aga** and **Charlene Muhlach** is on the rocks. I tried to get in touch with Charlene but I couldn't reach her.

I texted **Liezl Martinez**, Aga's cousin, and asked what the real score is. She texted back: "It's super not true at all!"

It's an open secret that Tita Nena and Aga are not exactly on good terms. I would like to think that what they have is disguised *lambing*.

I used to hang out a lot and sleep over at Tita Nena's place (since Liezl is like a sis to me and my mom and Tita Nena were the best of friends) so I saw how she looked out for Aga. It saddens me to see that external factors have come between them. If you take away all the "externals" and Tita Nena and Aga would just go back to the basics of family, I'm sure they will be able to iron things out.

Perhaps Tita Nena just wants to make her presence felt in Aga's life and remind him how it was when there were not too many "characters" around him yet.

Aga and Charlene both come from broken families. They know what they have missed so they will try even harder not to deprive their own kids of the joy of growing up in a healthy family environment.

As a bachelor, Aga has lived it up already, so I see no reason why he should stray now. And if there's one thing I know about Aga it's that when he falls, he really falls hard.

I remember when Charlene personally requested her staff on the now-defunct TV show "Keep on Dancing" to invite me to interview her on the show about her upcoming wedding with Aga. She said, "Aga and I have been friends for the longest time. When it hit us, we knew for sure it would be for keeps. No doubts crossed our minds that we want to spend eternity together."

Maybe they have spats every now and then just like any other couple but those just serve as "renewals" of love to make their bond stronger. They were bombarded with intrigues when they were about to tie the knot. They could have given up before but they held on to their love, against all odds. So what makes their detractors think Aga and Charlene will give up now that they have come this far?

RUMOR is spreading like wildfire that **Claudine Barretto** is pregnant.

Her sis **Marjorie** clarified to me that there's no truth to it at all. Claudine just happens to be playing a pregnant woman in her fantaserye "Marina," It's preposterous to conclude that she's infanticipating in real life as well.

Dom's business

WHAT drives **Dominic Ochoa?**

He never tires of pushing himself, constantly honing his craft and polishing his skills with every new project.

These days, the actor is reinventing himself as a TV host. After months of hosting "EK Channel," Dom says he is still feeling his way around. For lessons and inspiration, he turns to his hosting icons. "I look up to **Cito Beltran** and **Boy Abunda**. They're intelligent hosts because they read a lot. I think that's very important."

He is also learning a lot in his booming business venture, Thumbs Up! Ice cream which now has 30 outlets nationwide. It offers five different ice cream flavors that can be enjoyed for only P25 in the world's smallest cones.

For franchise inquiries on Thumbs Up!, call 687-4373.

MTV Style Awards

MTV is bringing together the country's coolest and classiest personalities at the MTV Style Awards. The ultra-chic event will honor the country's purveyors of standout style in fashion, music, movies, TV, business, sports, and politics through an extravagant show featuring Bamboo, **Jay-R**, Artstrong, Orange and Lemons, The Late Isabel, and RadioactiveSagoProject.

Until Sept. 20, 2004, fashionistas and fans can vote for their favorite nominees in eight categories. Here are the nominees for the people's choice awards:

Most Influential International Artist: **Beyonce Knowles, Jennifer Lopez, Lenny Kravitz, Britney Spears, Avril Lavigne.**

Favorite MTV Rockstyle (Male): **Bamboo Mañalac, Rico Blanco, Karl Roy, Christian Bautista,** Jay-R.

Favorite MTV Divastyle: **Barbie Almabis, Wawi Navarroza, Regine Velasquez, Cynthia Alexander, Grace Nono.**

Favorite Stylish Leading Lady: **Aubrey Miles, Claudine Barretto, Angel Aquino,** Regine Velasquez, **Kris Aquino.**

Favorite Stylish Leading Man: **Jericho Rosales, Piolo Pascual, Aga Muhlach, Diether Ocampo, Richard Gomez.**

AGA/ A26

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX
3 Dolby FENG SHUI 11:35 amn 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm
4 SDDS EXORCIST 12.50 pm 3:30 pm 6:10 pm 8:50 pm
5 dts ANACONDAS 11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm
6 Dolby THE TERMINAL 12.35 pm 3:20 pm 6:05 pm 8:50 pm
7 Dolby MIND HUNTERS 12 45 pm 3:15 pm 5:45 pm 8 15 pm
ARANETA COLISEUM
Sep 17 SOUTH BORDER CONCERT
Sep 18 WRR ANNIVERSARY CONCERT
Sep 19 ATENEO vs LA SALLE
Sep 22 NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS
Sep 23 UAAP CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS
Sep 24 NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS
Dec 11 JULIO IGLESIAS CONCERT
Dec 25 DISNEY ON ICE : Princess Classics
For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY, LEGEND OF [illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BIKTIMA / NAIIBANG HAYOP
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	FENG SHUI
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1,2,3 & 4	THE NOTEBOOK/THE TERMINAL/PRINCESS DIARIES 2/DODGEBALL
PREMIERE THEATRE	ANACONDAS
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	FENG SHUI
CINEMA-2	TAG-INIT
CINEMA-3	TOOLBOX MURDER
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DODGEBALL
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	GODSEND
CINEMA-6	THE NOTEBOOK
CINEMA-7	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
CINEMA-8	HAUNTED SPIRIT 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	EXORCIST THE BEGINNING
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ANACONDAS
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	13 GOING ON 30
CINEMA-12	MINDHUNTERS
CINEMA-14	THE TERMINAL
CINEMA-15	FENG SHUI
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	ALIEN VS PREDATOR
CINEMA-1	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
CINEMA-2	GARFIELD
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA 4	[illegible]

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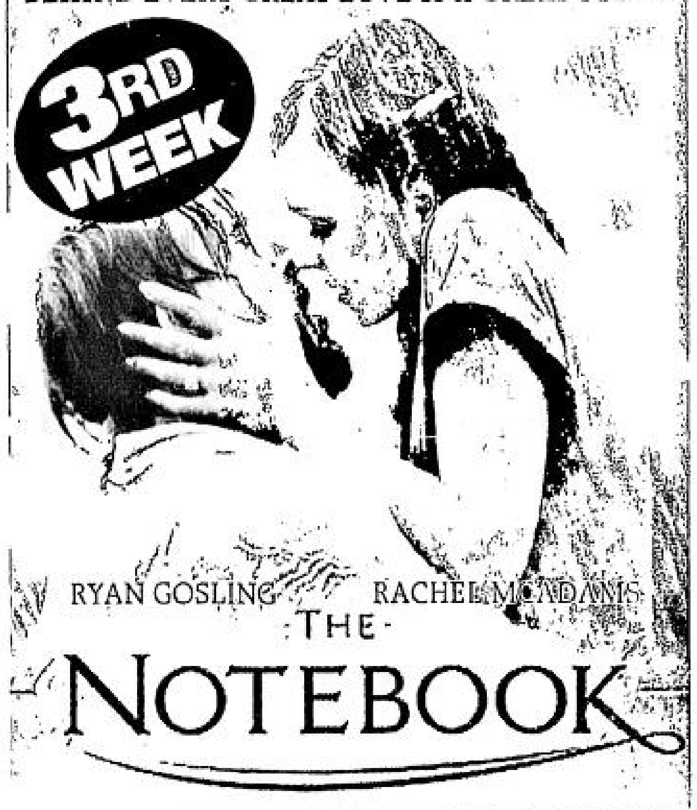
"A FEEL GOOD COMEDY THAT WILL KEEP YOU SMILING."
"YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A TEEN TO ENJOY '13 GOING ON 30'"
USA TODAY
jennifer garner
13 going on 30

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB ▶ R-13

GO BACK
TO WHERE
EVIL WAS BORN.
EXORCIST
THE BEGINNING

BEHIND EVERY GREAT LOVE IS A GREAT STORY



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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 13 GOING ON 30 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:10 PG-13
2 THE EXORCIST 11:45, 2:20, 4:55, 7:30, 10:20 R-13
3 THE TERMINAL 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:20 GP
4 FENG SHUI 10:30, 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 10:20 PG-13

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

DODGEBALL PG13 11:50,1:50,3:50, 5:50,7:50,9:50	13 GOING ON 30 PG13 12:00,2:00,4:05 ,6:10,8:15,10:20	EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING R13 12:20,2:45,5:10,7:35,10:05
FENG SHUI PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	MINDHUNTERS R13 1:00,3:15,5:30,7:45,10:00	TERMINAL GP 12:10,2:45,5:20,7:55,10:30

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

star group of cinemas movie guide
IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
starmall EDSA - SHAW
Tel. No. 726.61.50
Perlas
Exorcist
Feng Shui
METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Tel. No. 850.42.85
Mind Hunters
Feng Shui
Tag-Init
Anacondas
Exorcist
13 going 30
starmall LAS PINAS
Tel. No. 873.50.04
Feng Shui
Thunder Birds
FREE! Cinema Pass For every 3 tickets you buy at any Star Group of Cinemas

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 13 GOING ON 30
FS : 12:10PM, 2:25PM, 4:40PM, 6:55PM
LMF: 9:10PM
MTRCB Rating : (PG-13)
2 FENG SHUI
FS : 12:30PM, 2:45PM, 5:10PM, 7:35PM
LMF: 10:00PM
MTRCB Rating : (PG-13)
3 THE TERMINAL
FS : 11:40AM, 2:15PM, 4:50PM, 7:25PM
LMF: 10:00 PM
MTRCB Rating : (GP)
4 EXORCIST : The Beginning
FS : 12:30PM, 2:50PM, 5:10PM, 7:30PM
LMF: 9:50PM
MTRCB Rating : (R-13)
PREMIERE THEATRE
MINDHUNTERS
FS : 11:30AM, 1:50PM, 4:10PM, 6:30PM, 8:55PM
MTRCB Rating : (R-13)
For more information please call 633-2227 / 633-7851 loc. 171
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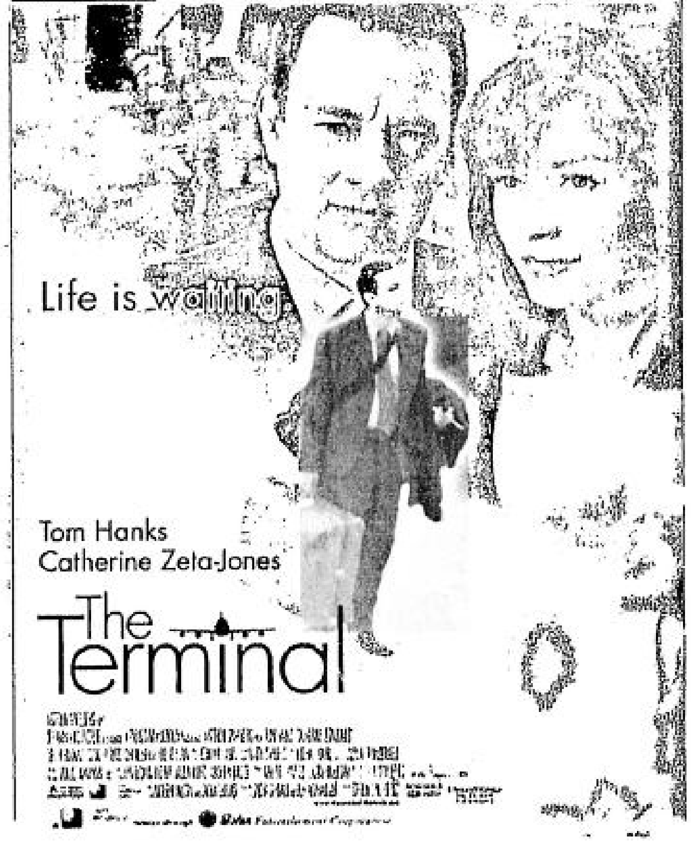

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8 FENG SHUI

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1 ANACONDAS
2 MINDHUNTERS
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4 EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING
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8 FENG SHUI

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3 FENG SHUI	3 FENG SHUI	3 FENG SHUI
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4 EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING	4 THE STEPFORD WIVES	4 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2
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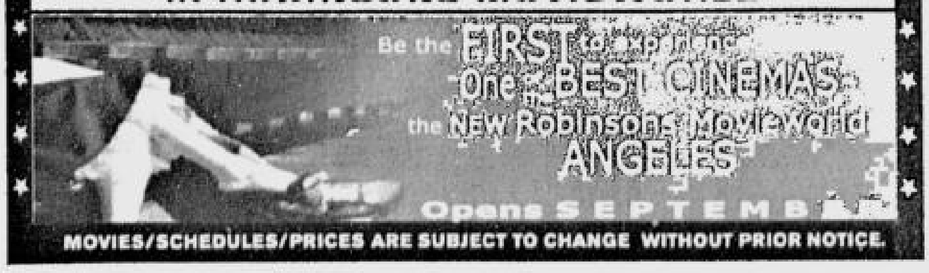

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2 13 GOING ON 30
3 FENG SHUI
4 MINDHUNTERS
5 THE TERMINAL

G1 GLORIETTA 1
1 13 GOING ON 30
2 EXORCIST THE BEGINNING
3 THE TERMINAL
4 FENG SHUI

G4 GLORIETTA 4
1 13 GOING ON 30
2 MINDHUNTERS
3 THX GUARANTEED SEATS EXORCIST 12 50, 3 15, 5 40, 8 05, 10 30
4 DODGEBALL
5 THE TERMINAL
6 FENG SHUI
7 THE NOTEBOOK

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 13 GOING ON 30 12 45, 3 00, 5:15, 7 30, 9 45
2 FENG SHUI

GB3 GREENBELT 3
1 THX GUARANTEED SEATS 13 GOING ON 30 2 20, 4 35, 6 50, 9 05, 11 20
2 THX GUARANTEED SEATS EXORCIST THE BEGINNING 1 50, 4 15, 6 40, 9 05, 11 30
3 GUARANTEED SEATS FENG SHUI
4 GUARANTEED SEATS THE NOTEBOOK 1 30, 4 00, 6 30, 9 00, 11 30
5 GUARANTEED SEATS THE TERMINAL 1 30, 4 00, 6 30, 9 00, 11 30

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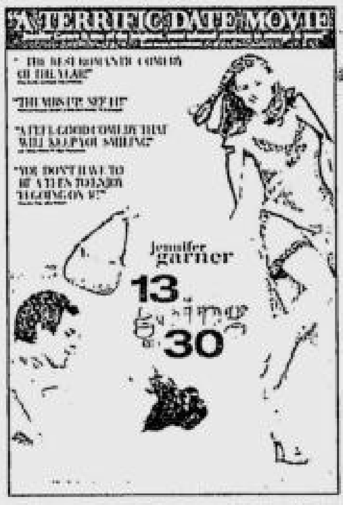

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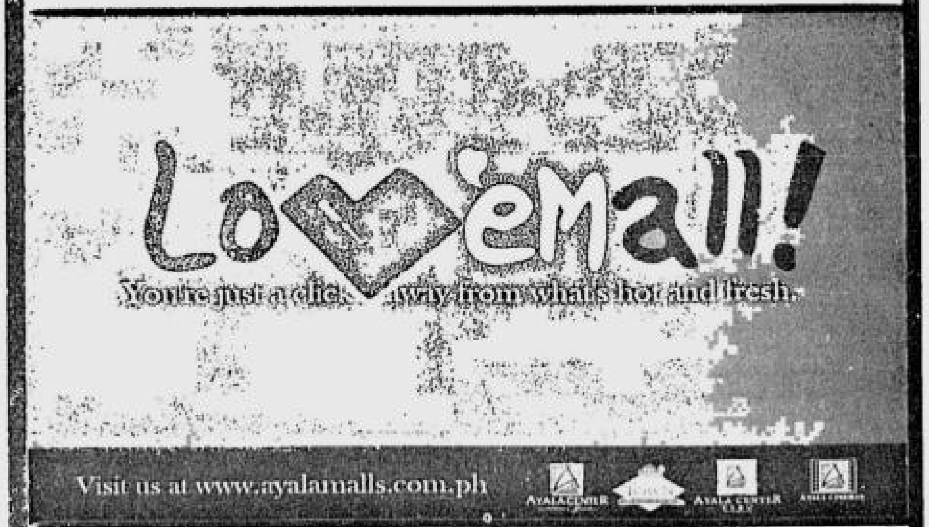
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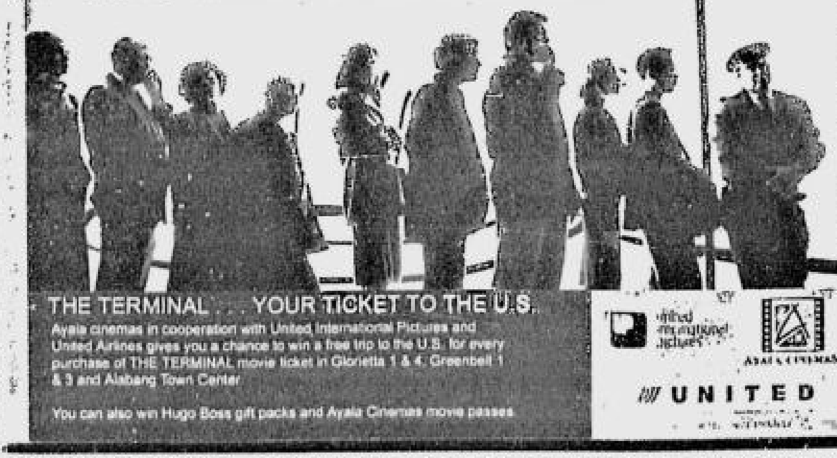

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DID YOU KNOW...

Lucy Torres and her daughter **Juliana** were at the Max Brenner chocolate bar in Greenbelt, Makati last Monday night when designer **Inno Sotto** approached them to talk to Lucy. At another table was a group of actresses that included **Chanda Romero** and **Maila Gumila.**

Aga...

From page A25

Favorite Stylish Dynamic Duo: **Ariel & Maverick, Kristine Hermosa** and **Diether Ocampo, Kris Aquino and Boy Abunda, Marc Nelson** and **Dyan Castillejo, Phoemela Baranda** and **Paolo Bediones.**

Favorite Stylish Power Player–Male: **Miguel Zubiri, Mar Roxas, Eddie Gil, Francis Escudero, Lito Atienza.**

Favorite Stylish Power Player–Female: **Loren Legarda, Imee Marcos, Ces Drilon, Imelda Marcos, Gina de Venecia.**

There are four easy ways to vote for your favorite MTV Style Awards nominees: via e-mail by sending your votes to mtvstyleawards@mtv-asia.com; fax your votes to 325-1MTV or 325-1688; via SMS (for both Smart and Globe subscribers) by sending MTVSTYLE to 29768; or log on to www.pinoyexchange.com/mtv.

For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

CBCP sets 2nd ...

From page A27

The viewing public is concerned and impatient, and awaits the festival's hopefully enlightened response and decision—surely, before the end of the month?

Wedding Expo

FROM 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sept. 18 and 19 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, a theme party and wedding expo will be held to showcase the latest fashions, decorators, planners, photographers, party hosts, vacation getaways and entertainment.

Schedule of special events: Sept. 18 at 6 p.m., "Kasalan, Kasiyahan Atbp.," a bridal fashion show. At 10 p.m., "Let's Get Elemental," a multimedia art party with a musical performance by Elemento.

Sept. 19 at 10 a.m., children's entertainment with bubble show, games, storytelling, yoyo demonstration, arts and crafts, mad science and hair and body painting. Call 819-1497.

CBCP sets second Catholic TV Advocacy seminar Sept. 17-18

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST June, we conceptualized and helped facilitate a Catholic TV Advocacy seminar for the Office on Women of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. We did so because television has become the most powerful and influential medium in this country, and yet as many current TV programs show, the industry's ethical direction is disturbingly off-tangent.

We expected some 30 people to sign up for the seminar, but we were surprised when 60 showed up. To our mind, this indicated that many Catholics are concerned about the way TV here is progressing or retrogressing, and feel the need to help make sure that it engenders positive rather than negative values in our viewers, especially the vulnerable and impressionable youth.

As the seminar progressed, that concern was expressed in greater detail, and with telling urgency. The people taking the seminar were a mix of parents, educators, religious, lay leaders, media professionals and students. They were eager to learn how the TV medium worked in the local context, and how it utilized its unique strengths to exert such a potent influence on the viewing nation.

Armed with that knowledge and understanding, they felt that they were better prepared to evaluate the positive and negative effects of local TV shows, which they proceeded to critique from a more realistic and informed perspective.

They then proceeded to write letters to newspapers, the networks and advertisers to either praise or criticize what they watched on the tube, with the view in mind of making the TV industry realize that viewers here had ceased to be passive and easy to manipulate and now demanded their rightful say in the nature and quality of the shows they would allow into their homes.

Going even further, the CBCP Office on Women formed a TV Advocacy group that would officially critique local TV shows for wide dissemination, and even originate worthy productions of its own.

The first seminar was so successful and effective that some participants went on to form adjunct advocacy groups in their own schools, organizations and offices, thus expanding the reach of the new movement for TV reforms.

There was also a clamor for another Catholic TV Advocacy initiative so the Office on Women spearheaded by **Dr. Zenaida V. Rotea** has asked us to facilitate another seminar on Sept. 17 and 18 (this Friday and Saturday) at the CBCP compound in Intramuros. Other resource persons include acclaimed stage-TV director **Leo Rialp**, psychologist-educator **Lorenzo S. Abacan**, and a panel of young viewers.

Catholics who believe in the importance of TV and the need for concerned and enlightened viewers to give it an ethical perspective are urged to take the seminar. Call 527-1925, 527-8031 or 0927-644-7300.

Sterling Campus Idol

ON SEPT. 17, auditions for the first Sterling Campus Idol will be held at San Beda College on Mendiola Avenue. There are two categories for both high school and college levels, for solo singer and hip-hop group. Call 886-4407.

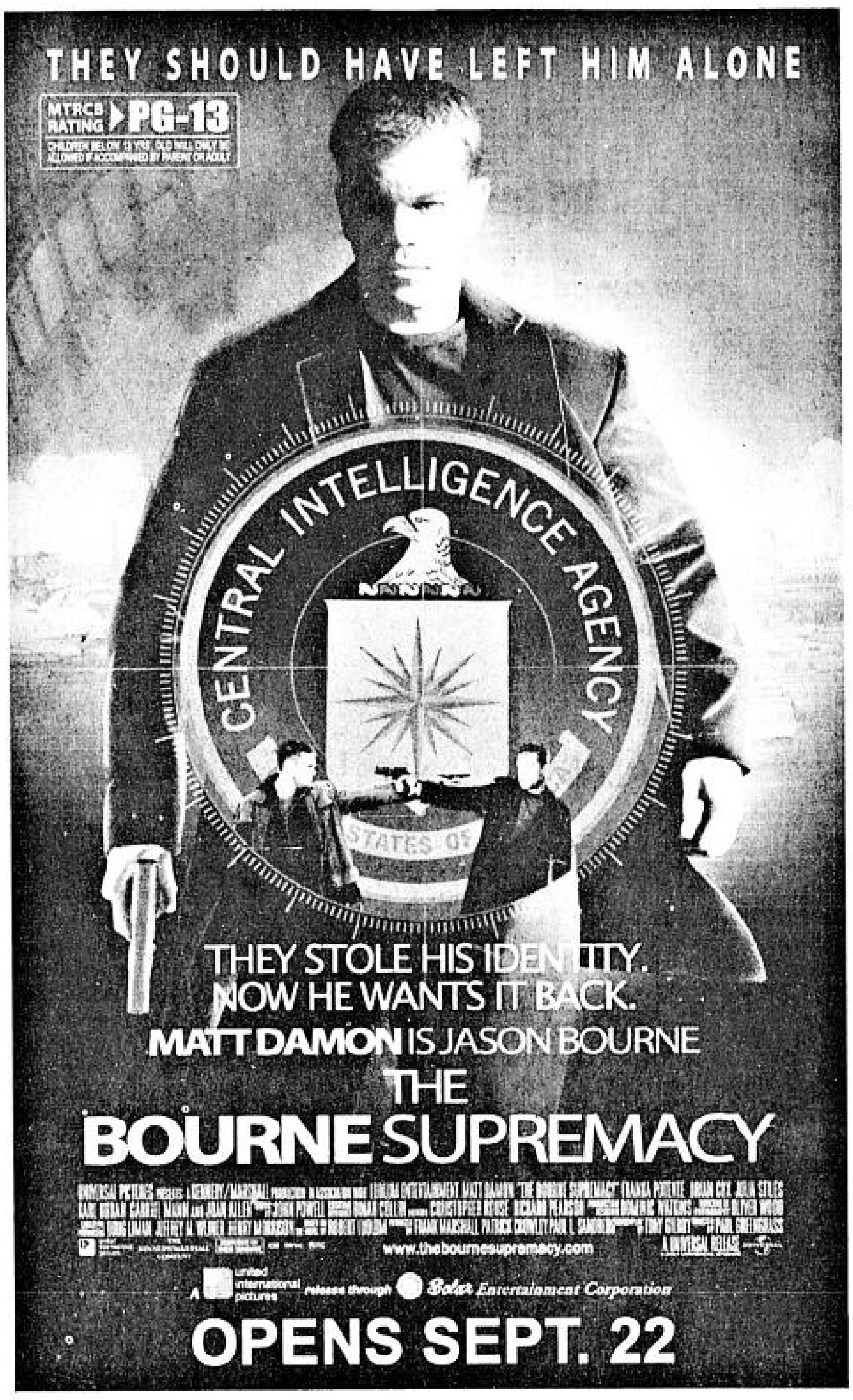
The Sterling Campus Idol search is produced by DL Media Focus International Inc., with TV director **Pat Perez** as overall creative director.

MMFF decision awaited

IT'S BEEN weeks since complaints have been advanced regarding what is perceived to be the flawed selection process of the 2004 Metro Manila Film Festival. As of this writing, however, no official response has been forthcoming from the film fest's executive committee.

Is it because a "powerful" producer is involved? We trust that the festival's decision-makers will rise above subjective considerations and realize, no matter if belatedly and retroactively, that truth, fairness, objectivity and justice are the most truly powerful considerations of all.

CBCP/ A26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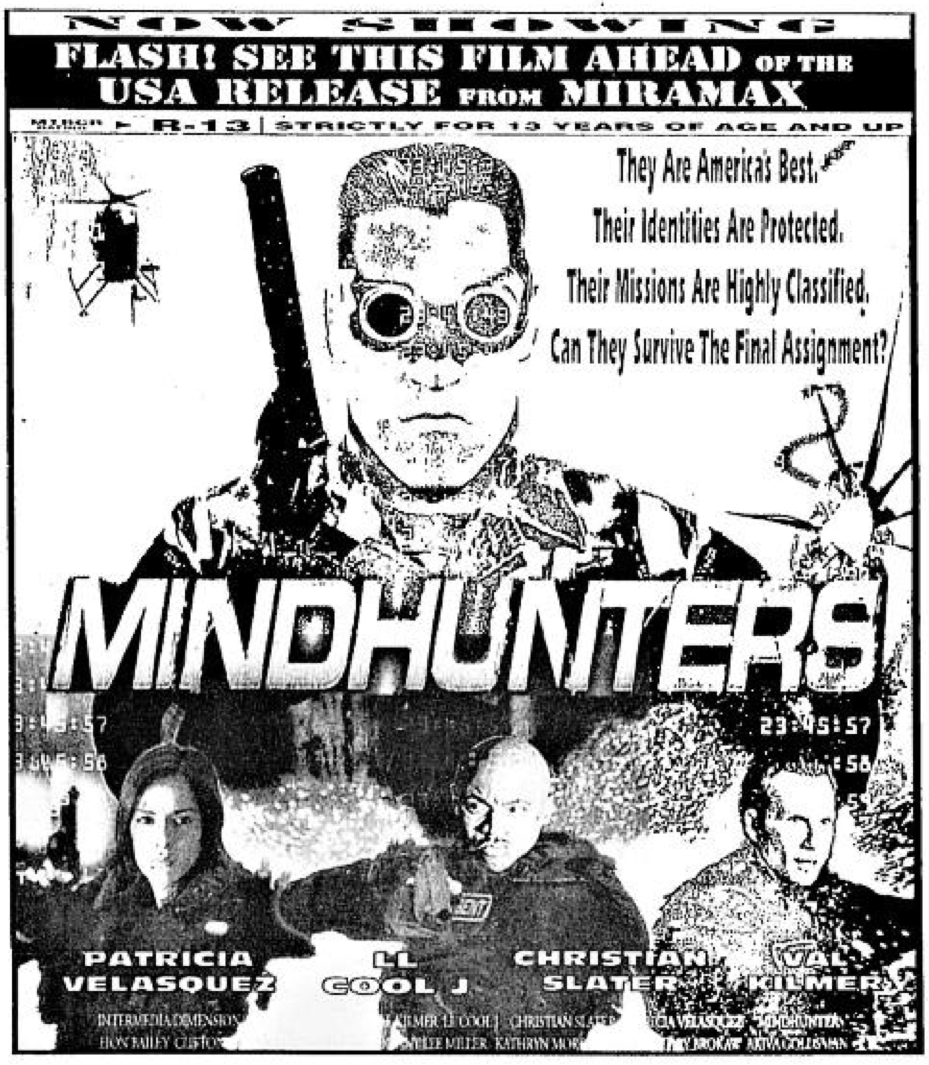
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ASIA'S EROTIC PHENOMENON

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Starmills-Pmapanga

CAST:
Viapavee Charoenpua, Christy Chung, Suwinit Panjamawat.
SYNOPSIS:
Jan Dara is a film set in the moody and turbulent Thailand of the 1930s Jan Dara is the name of a Thai young man whose earliest memories recall his own father having sex with his childhood nanny In this lopsided and obsessive world At the tender age of thirteen, he was cast out of his comfortable but troubled household after his stepsister accused him of rape. Years later Jan Dara returns home to seek revenge on his father by outdoing his father's sexual conquests and making him be witness to his triumphs he is unwittingly becoming the man that he dreads most

MTRCB Rating: R18
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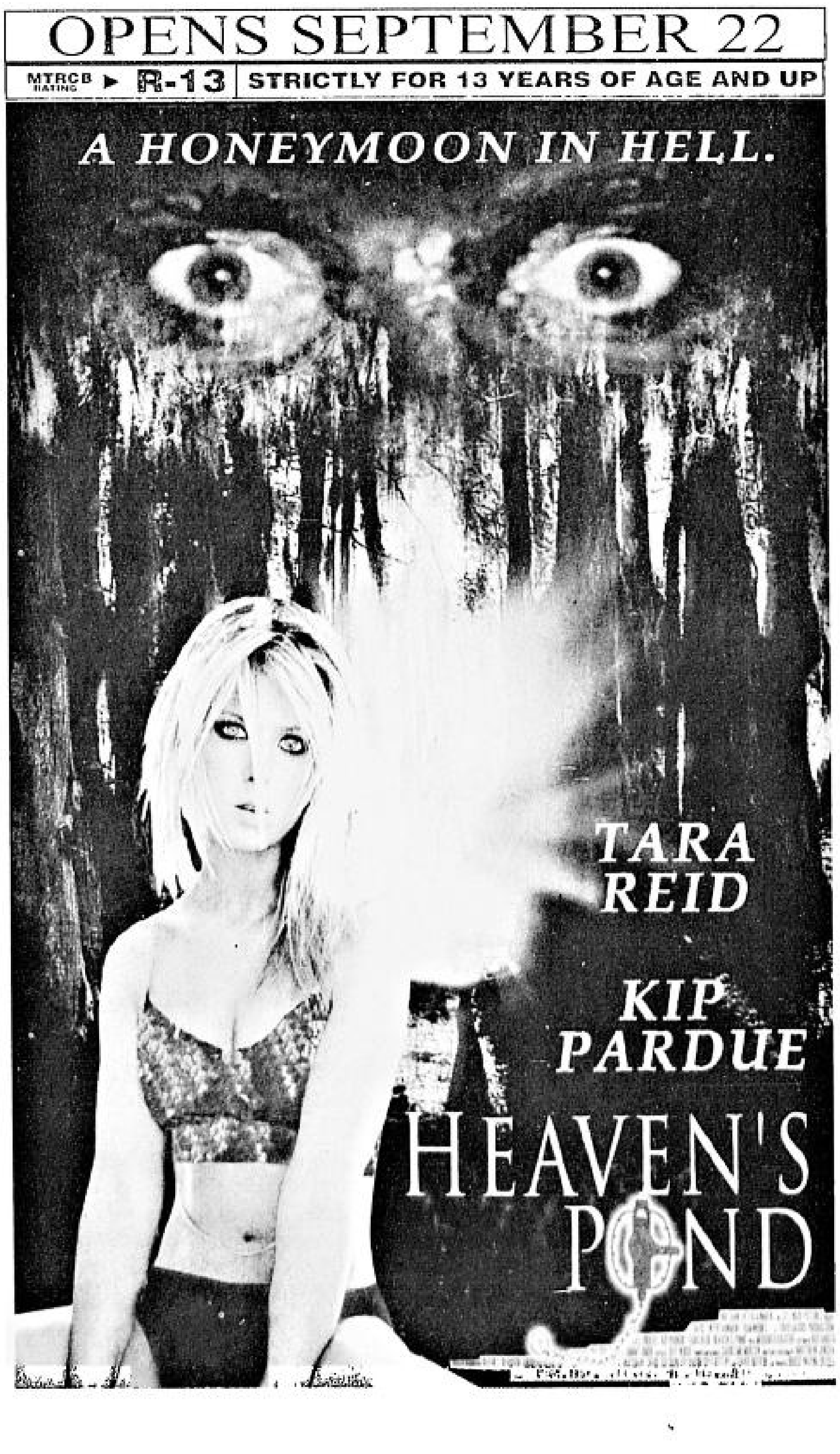
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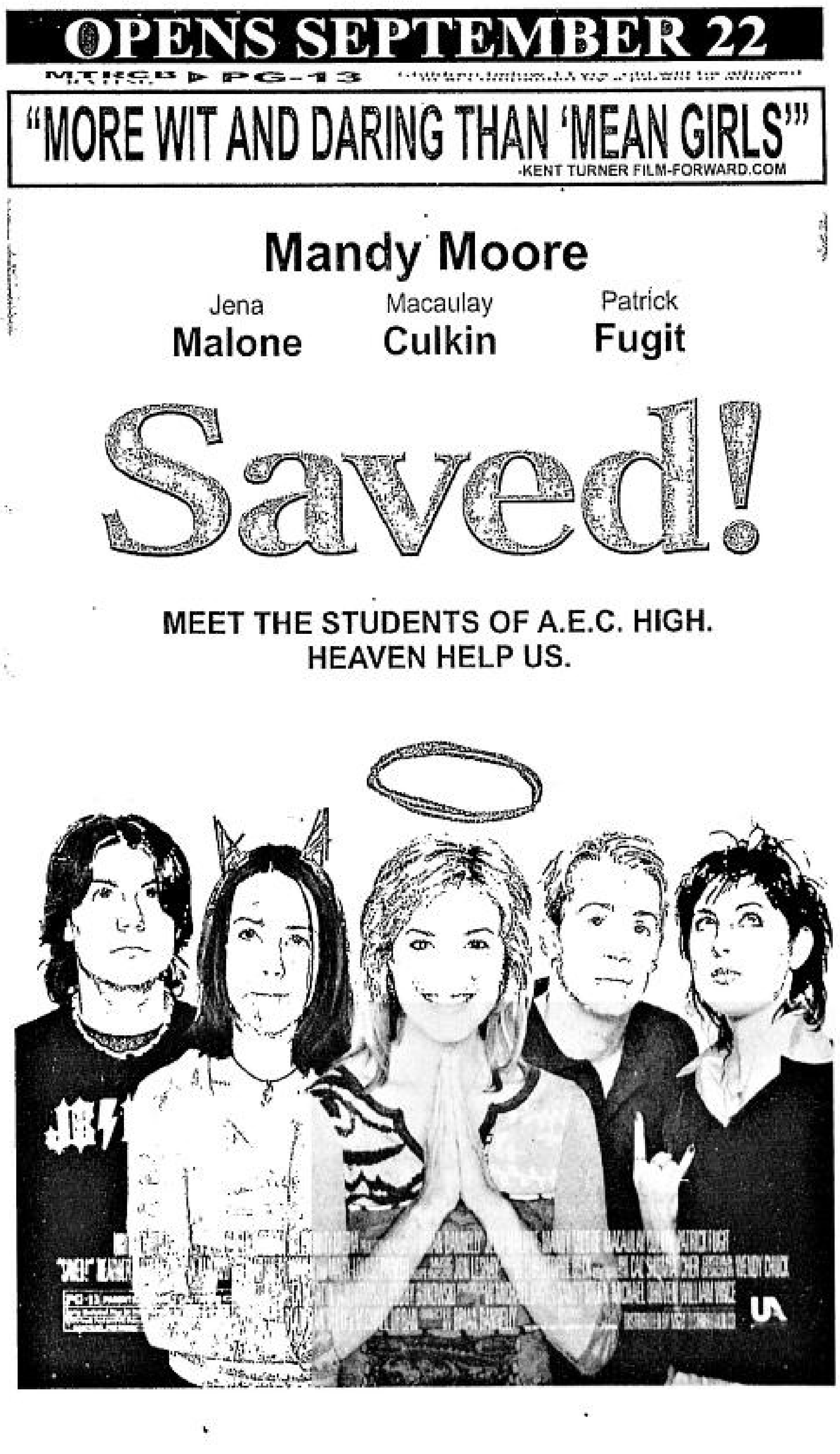
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Ruffa gave birth during conference call

Yilmaz was on the speaker phone, shouting 'Push! Push!'

"LORAN" means beautiful in Kurdish, says Ruffa (with her first-born Lorin) of her second daughter's name.

By Marinel R. Cruz

RUFFA Gutierrez gave birth to her second baby in California while she was on a three-way conference call with her husband Yilmaz Bektas, his mother and his grandmother who were all in Turkey.

Ruffa told INQUIRER Entertainment that Yilmaz was with her throughout the delivery, "shouting 'Push! Push!' through the speaker phone."

"I even passed the phone to the doctor while she was cleaning me so Yilmaz could hear the baby," Ruffa shared in a phone interview last Monday.

Yilmaz's mother, Nurhan Celik, and his grandmother were on a three-way conference call with her and Yilmaz during the delivery last Sept. 11 at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California.

Like a cow

Ruffa said her epidural anesthesia ran out a few minutes before she gave birth. She said it took awhile for new medicine injected to her to take effect, "so I was screaming like a cow!"

"Thank God Venice was only 5.3 lbs," she said. "It was really painful."

Her mother Anabel and brother Elvis arrived in L. A. Monday night (Tuesday morning in Manila), "so I have tons of help," Ruffa said.

She said she's been busy "playing super mom" since she gave birth, spending time with her first-born, Lorin, who turned 1 last Aug. 3, while taking care of her newborn.

She said she and Yilmaz have decided to name their second daughter Venezia Loran Bektas.

"Loran means beautiful in Kurdish," Ruffa told INQUIRER Entertainment on the phone.

The actress had given birth three weeks ahead of schedule. Mother and daughter were waiting for Yilmaz to arrive from Turkey "anytime this week," said Ruffa.

"Just call me Venice for short," Ruffa, in a text message, said of her new baby's name. "I know Loran kind of sounds like Ate Lorin's name but dad absolutely loves it because it means beautiful in Kurdish. A unique name for a unique little girl like me."

Ruffa said she was expecting to deliver the baby on Sept. 30, but her doctor warned her that it "might come sooner, around the 18th or 19th."

"I didn't think I'd give birth on the 11th," Ruffa recalled. "On the evening of Sept. 10, I was just home. I just took a shower and didn't want to stand up anymore. I was talking on the phone with a friend when I laughed and I felt a gush of water. When I stood up, more water flowed down my legs."

Ruffa called her doctor, who told her to pack her things and prepare to go to the hospital. "I was with Lorin, her *yaya*, a nurse and Jun Lalin at that time," she said. "But I didn't want to go yet. I was thinking, maybe it was a false alarm."

The actress said she would be back in the Philippines as soon as she recovers. She has agreed to do two TV commercials here.

She will also be promoting her new line of cosmetics and scents, named after Lorin.

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by Cravings Café
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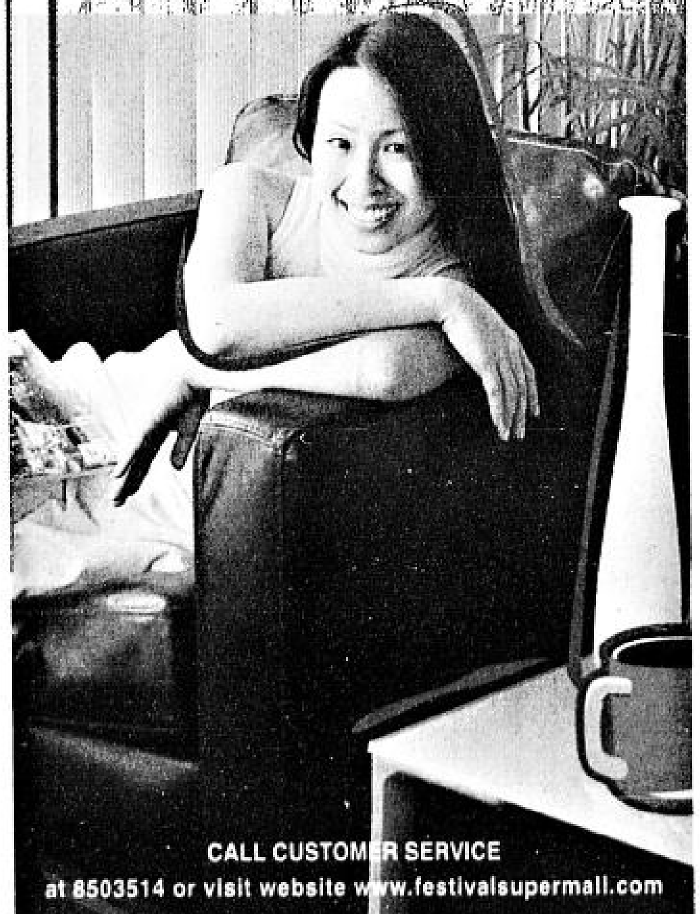
FRESH FLOWER ARRANGEMENT WORKSHOP
by Flowers by Sylvia
Oct 3 (Sun), 4PM



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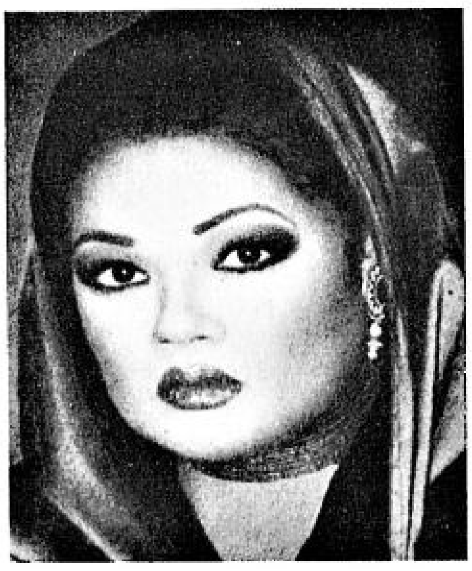

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Recomputation to trim gov't debt by ₱1T

By Michelle V. Remo and Carlito Pablo

THE COUNTRY'S public sector debt will be reduced by more than P1 trillion once the government finishes recomputing the debt figure based on a new accounting system, the adoption of which is intended to rectify what the finance department considered as "double-counting" done in the past.

An official from the Department of Finance (DOF) said the consolidated public sector debt, which was earlier reported to have reached 137.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), or P5.912 trillion, would be reduced to below 100 percent of GDP, or lower than P4.2 trillion.

The DOF official, who is involved in the recomputation of the debt, also said earlier that the lower debt figure could somehow improve investor perception on the Philippines, which is struggling to improve its image after the government admitted the country was facing a full-blown fiscal crisis.

Under the old accounting method, the borrowings of the national government from government-owned and -controlled corporations, such as through bonds issues, were counted as part of the consolidated public sector debt. Also, borrowings by government agencies or state-owned firms from the national government were also considered part of the debt of the public sector.

The DOF explained that borrowings between government entities should not be included in the computation of the public sector debt because the money was just being transferred from one agency to another within the government. Only borrowings from sources outside the government should be counted as a public sector liability.

Therefore, under the new accounting method, which was proposed by the International Monetary Fund, the borrowings made by the national government from GOCCs and social security institutions will be deducted from the latest reported public-sector debt figure.

Under the new accounting method, the amount of money placed by the national government in the sinking fund will also be deducted from the debt figure. The sinking fund is the money allotted by the national government to the Central Bank Board of Liquidators (CB-BOL), which uses the amount to pay off the old central bank's debts.

Of the earlier reported P5.91-trillion debt of the public sector as of end-2003, which will be corrected later, debt from domestic sources reached P2.44 trillion, or 56.9 percent of GDP. It is from this figure that the double-counted debt will be deducted.

Foreign debt, meanwhile, stood at P3.467 billion, or 80.7 percent of GDP.

Of the P5.91 trillion, the na-

RECOMPUTATION/ B3

Cell phone insurance promises peace of mind

By Amy R. Remo

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BY ONE measure, cell phone theft went down from 25,000 incidents in 2002 to 14,171 in 2003. But eStandard Insurance Corp. president Ernesto Echauz believes the decline is not because the actual number of incidents has actually dropped.

On the contrary.

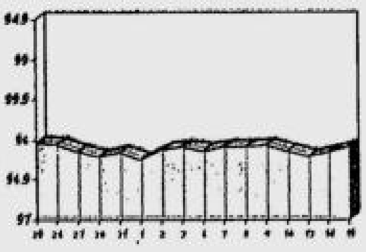
"We think more and more people are losing their cell phones to thieves, accidents and other circumstances. But the number of those who actually report the loss to authorities is declining," Echauz said. "We suspect that people have realized the futility of reporting."

Enter eStandard, which saw a business opportunity in these two contrasting trends. Last month, it launched Txt2Protect, the first

CELL PHONE/ B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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As of 5 p.m., Sept. 15, 2004

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As of 5 p.m., Sept. 15, 2004

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per ounce Hong Kong, Sept. 15, 2004

STOCK MARKET

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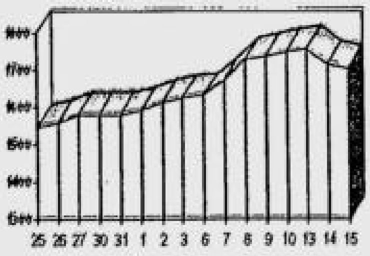

(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares end down

SHARES ended lower yesterday for the second straight session as the market continued to undergo a technical correction following huge gains earlier this month.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed down 11.37 points, or 0.7 percent, at 1,706.08. It lost 2.3 percent Tuesday after rising 11 percent in nine straight sessions to set a 53-month closing high Monday.

The selloff was not broad-based, as some bargain hunters accumulated select stocks on dips, encouraged by favorable corporate earnings expectations for this year and the next, and by the government's efforts to address its fiscal problems, traders said.

Blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) was the most actively traded stock, down P15, or 1.1 percent, at P1,370, in step with the 1-percent loss suffered by the company's American Depositary Receipts Tuesday. AP

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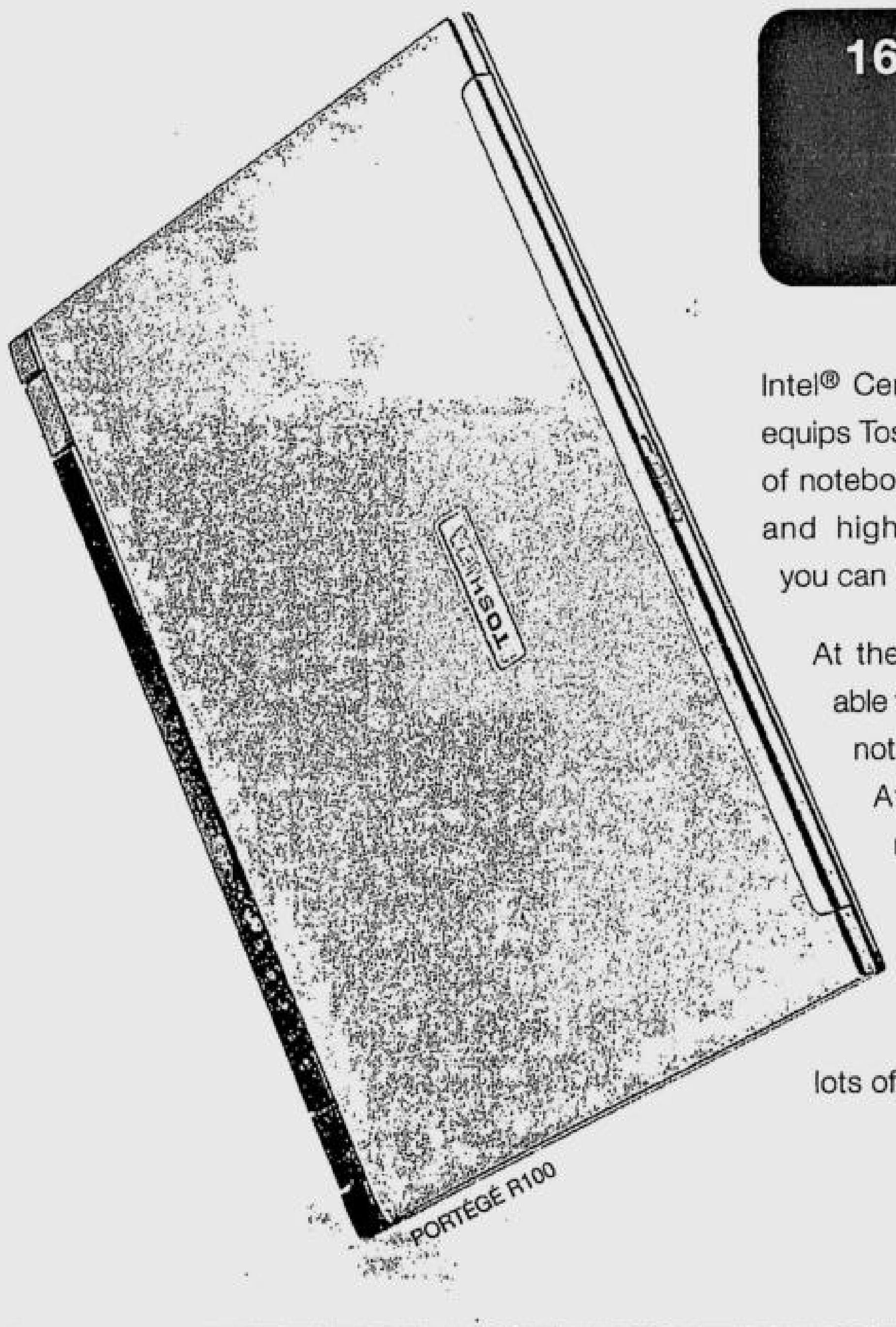

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July unemployment rate down to 11.7%, says NSO

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S unemployment rate declined to 11.7 percent in July from 12.6 percent recorded in the same month last year, according to The National Statistics Office (NSO).

The NSO attributed the drop in unemployment to the creation of more jobs in the agriculture and services sectors.

NSO officials yesterday reported from its Labor Force Survey that of the 35.83 million Filipinos belonging to the labor force, 4.2 million were unemployed. The number of unemployed was an improvement from the 4.399 million recorded in July 2003, when the the registered workforce totaled 34.8 million.

The July figure was also lower than the end-April jobless rate of 13.7 percent, when the results of the last labor force survey was released.

The NSO said that the lower unemployment rate was a result of the 1.17 million new jobs created during the period, which exceeded the 980,000 new entrants to the labor force. The number of new jobs created in July was about three times higher than the 347,000 jobs created in the same month last year.

National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) Director General Romulo Neri said in a statement that the decline in the unemployment rate indicated strong demand for labor, after the economy picked up and despite talks of a fiscal crisis.

Of all industry groups, it is the agriculture sector that has boosted the country's employment the most, creating an additional 613,000 jobs. The services sector generated 598,000 more jobs. The industry sector, on the contrary, shed off 40,000 jobs. The number of employed persons in the industry sector decreased to 4.93 million in July from 4.97 million during the same month last year.

The NSO reported that across all regions in the country, the National Capital Region recorded the highest unemployment rate of 18.4 percent.

Other regions that posted double-digit unemployment rates were the Calabarzon (covering the areas of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, and Rizal) at 14.4 percent; Central Luzon, 13.3 percent; Central Visayas, 12.8 percent; Ilocos, 12.7 percent, Cotabato-Sarangani-General Santos (Socsargen), 10.7 percent; and Davao, 10.1 percent.

According to the NSO, 4.6 percent of the unemployed belonged to the "young" category, or those whose ages range from 15 to 24 years old. 25 percent were aged 25 to 34 years old, and the remaining 28.6 percent were aged 35 years old and above.

Meanwhile, underemployment rate also improved to 17.6 percent, representing 5.57 million Filipinos out of the total labor force.

The figures were better than the underemployment rate in July 2003 of 20.7 percent, or 6.314 million Filipinos.

This meant that the number of underemployed persons, or those who desired additional work hours because they work less than the regular 40 hours per week, decreased by about 744,000.

Full-time workers, or those who worked for at least 40 hours a week increased to 20.1 million from only 19.9 million. Those who worked for less than 40 hours also increased to 11.1 million from 10.2 million.

The Arroyo administration has included in its economic-reform agenda the creation of at least 10 million new jobs for the rest of her term until 2010.

The administration is looking at several measures, such as boosting lending to small and medium enterprises, to create more jobs. *With a report from AFP*

US call center firm to invest $14M in RP operations

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A CALL center firm based in the United States yesterday announced it was expanding its Philippine operations by $13 million to $15 million over the next two years amid growing demand for business process outsourcing.

John J. Brennan, chair and chief executive of the Philadelphia-based ICT Group, said the firm plans to put up at least 1,300 workstations by the end of 2004.

Brennan said the expansion would mean that 15 percent of ICT Group's production would be coming from its operations here.

The company has about 9,000 seats in 45 call centers worldwide and is operating in a total of eight countries, including Australia, Canada and Ireland.

Last year, the Nasdaq-listed firm opened its first Philippine contact center in Makati, which has about 700 seats.

With the completion of a second contact center in the Ortigas Center, Brennan said ICT Group's investments in the Philippine has reached $15 million.

"We plan to open a third contact center here in 2005," he said. "That would have 500 to 700 seats, which would cost $5 million to $7 million."

Brennan said the company was pouring in more money into the country because the workers here were "most skilled, educated and enthusiastic."

"We don't see anywhere else in the world the kind of energy level that contact center agents here have," he added.

Brennan said he would also like the Philippines to continue its focus on education, English language proficiency and telecommunications infrastructure to promote the continued growth of the industry.

Karen V. Batungbacal, ICT Group president in the Asia-Pacific, said one of the reasons why companies worldwide preferred to outsource business processes to the country was the acceptability of Filipinos' accent compared to those of other Asians.

"We don't tell our clients that our call center agents will have no (local) accent because that is not possible," Batungbacal said.

Brennan, for his part, said the average American would not be able to discern whether a call center agent was based in Arizona or the Philippines.

In a statement, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said his department has stepped up the promotion of information technology services for the country to gain a bigger share of the global BPO market.

"We are positioning the country as the IT services center in the Asia-Pacific," Purisima said.

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Power collapse absolutely

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IF DUTY to country calls, and it says, "hoy, ikaw, Banal," and it asks me to donate my old jockstraps, plus my mother's new dentures, to the Bayanihan Fund of this cute administration of Gloriaetta, by all means, I will think about it.

This cute administration already shed its political inhibition, and it admitted that we could expect a "fiscal" crisis in a couple of years.

By the looks of it, although the Palace is still shy about it, we can look forward to another paralyzing "power" crisis also in a couple of years.

Wow! What a combination! If the "fiscal" crisis erupts, we can no longer borrow money from abroad which keeps us afloat today. And when the "power" crisis becomes a certainty, a lot of businesses will die. This economy will collapse, and it will collapse absolutely. Lovely!

That's why I must consider donating my old supporters to the Bayanihan Fund.

It's the least I can do to follow the lead of our beloved congressmen.

To keep their billions upon billions of pork barrel, they already made the ultimate sacrifice of lying.

* * *

IN THE House of Representatives, they made the supreme act of making a big fuss out of their decision to make it appear in media that they already gave up their "pork."

Those billions upon billions of "pork" will still be in the 2005 budget. Only, our heroes in the House will use a different method to get it. "Transparent," they call it.

Still, their favorite contractors will be ... well, "very happy." What a sacrifice!

In turn, after their historic initiative to mislead us in their media release, our beloved congressmen will crack the fiscal whip on the executive.

They decided to apply "line item budgeting." This simply means that the congressmen will question every detail in the budget proposal of each government office.

Who knows, with their penchant for fighting over just about anything, including the position of deputy speaker, they may finish the 2005 budget in the next lifetime.

* * *

AND all that maneuvering over "pork," taking place in the legislative and executive branches, behooves me to donate old clothes to the Bayanihan Fund.

I can tell it's a serious campaign, just by looking at its name, complete with capital letters, similar to the title "Honorable" before the names of our congressmen. It has, in short, become a proper noun. It's that serious!

Okay, so they are moving heaven and earth, and borrowing private jets to go to Brunei, to try to avert the forthcoming "fiscal" crisis, mainly by talking about it to death.

But how come they are not according the "power" crisis the same death sentence by chatter? For us, therefore, it's "hello, 12-hour blackouts, welcome back!"

* * *

NOBODY doubts that the power crisis is coming. In Western Visayas, where Gloriaetta won by a mind-blowing margin, they are already enjoying rotating brownouts.

But I'm sure that the brownouts were not the main reason why Gloriaetta got almost all of the votes there.

The brownouts, anyway, are probably the reason why the Asian Development Bank, which is a pushy financier of this country, says that we need to start building more power plants soon.

In the next 10 years, based on ADB studies, our generating capacity should go up to at least 20,000 megawatts. We have roughly 13,000 megawatts today, and not all of it is reliable. Look at that, we need to build plants to generate 50 percent more of the power we produce today.

It is indeed a tall order for this cute administration, which cannot seem to take control of anything, including the coming and going of its key personnel.

What are we doing about the "power" crisis? Well, basically, nothing much!

* * *

IT is understandable that the financial hands of this cute administration are tied. It does not have the money for power plants. A lot of funding goes to priorities such as "pork."

To build the additional plants, we need $6 billion in 10 years. To prevent the onset of the "power" crisis by, say, 2007, we should start putting up new plants, even if these only amount to 2,500 megawatts in additional capacity. The cost of the plants will amount to $2.5 billion. That is already about P140 billion!

I don't know if the Bayanihan Fund can even reach the amount equivalent to the waste of the bacteria in the dirt of the small fingernail of that kind of money!

* * *

WHEN the "power" crisis is finally upon us in a couple of years, this cute administration must then follow the model of Kuya Eddie who solved a similar crisis in the early '90s.

At that time, the government simply sold us down the river, accepting the high power charges, not to mention other onerous conditions such as "take or pay" from the famous IPPs, the so-called independent power producers.

Guess who's paying for the costly power! No, wrong, it's not the Bayanihan Fund! You and me, all of us taxpayers, must pay for it!

Such is the price of neglect by the government. Everybody suffers. If we dillydally on this certain "power" crisis again, like Tita Cory did in the late '80s, we can only see a repeat of Kuya Eddie's IPP and its resulting PPA.

That's the charge in your electric bill which, for humanitarian reasons such as her popularity rating, Gloriaetta decided to subsidize, leaving Napocor bleeding to death.

* * *

WITH government out of the picture after it buries Napocor, our only hope will be private investments. That's why we need to act now. Not tomorrow! Now!

The policy setting in the power sector is not really that awesome for investors. It's more on the "awful" side, actually, rather than "awesome."

Do you hear of any private investment going into the power sector nowadays? It's all probably just in the press releases of Energy Secretary Vincent "the Silent" Perez. He also does not even care to say the name of the investors. *Basta*, there is interest!

Nobody is serious about investing in new billion-peso power plants, precisely because of lousy policy setting.

There is the subsidy, for one! In terms of pricing, nobody can compete with rates subsidized by the government, even if the government is already bankrupt.

And then the Supreme Court tries to meddle in everything that has to do with power rates. It thinks it has the technical know-how to set the rates itself.

And what is this cute administration doing about it? Well, as I said, basically, nothing much. I think the "power" crisis needs the attention of no less than Gloriaetta herself. Believe me, it has come to that!

HCPT cargo volume surged in August

THE VOLUME of noncontainerized cargo at the Harbour Centre Port Terminal (HCPT) continues to surge in August, with total sales increasing by almost 20 percent to 333,949 metric tons (MT) compared to July this year.

From 279,422 MT in July, HCPT's cargo volume increased by 54,277 MT the following month.

In all, Harbour Centre wracked up a total volume of 1.16 million MT for the first eight months of 2004.

From January to July, HCPT posted a net income of P32.76 million.

Total revenues during the same period reached P162.03 million.

Records show that in just six months from January, 90 percent of International noncontainerized vessels entering the country have docked at Harbour Centre.

Cargoes include steel, logs, lumber, rice, fertilizer, gypsum, silica, frozen fish, wheat, grains, sugar, soya, livestock and iron ore.

HCPT, a 10-hectare private port within the Manila Harbour Centre—part of the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project (SMDRO)—currently handles only noncontainerized cargo.

It has sought a permit from the Philippine Ports Authority to handle containerized cargo shipments.

Harbour Centre recently set a record when it undertook one of the biggest pierside operations in recent years.

The operation last April, involving M/V Yick Fat, a 42-ton cargo vessel from Russia carrying 39,940 metric tons of steel billets, was hailed as a record accomplishment in local shipping standards.

The cargo was unloaded efficiently with zero pilferage in just five working days.

The turnaround is almost 20 percent more efficient than the normal timetable.

CAP to sign deal on P6-B property infusion

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED giant College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) is set to sign a memorandum of agreement with a local property developer today on a P6-billion property infusion into the company.

In a briefing, CAP first vice president Bobby Café said the 3,000-hectare property from the local investor would be transferred to its trust fund. The property was assessed by Cuervo Appraisers Inc. and Philippine Real Estate Ratings, both accredited by the Securities and Exchange Commission, and valued the land at P200 per square meter, the official said.

He added that to maximize the value of the new land asset, it would propose to sell the land to schools that want to expand their network. The value of the land can grow over the next five years.

For those schools who cannot pay immediately in cash for the land bought from CAP, the pre-need firm could propose certain arrangements such as allowing the schools to settle the amount by offsetting the acquisition cost against the liabilities of CAP to these schools.

Café stressed that this was just a possible business proposal.

He also said that CAP had already paid penalties with the SEC for exceeding the P5-billion limit of securities it was allowed to sell. It exceeded the limit by P64 million in August.

The SEC had asked CAP to stop selling securities in August until it has fully complied with the requirements for the additional P1 billion worth of plans to be sold.

As of yesterday, CAP said it had submitted pending requirements for its application to sell new securities—clarifications on its trust fund contributions and a justification of the interest rate used for its trust fund.

Recomputation

From page B1

tional government had the biggest share of P4.06 trillion, followed by the 14 GOCCs monitored by the DOF (including National Power Corp.), whose debt has reached P1.57 trillion. The remaining P2.76 trillion are accounted for by social security institutions (Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System), the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and government financial institutions.

At the House of Representatives, congressmen have taken the first step toward reviewing the extent and nature, and providing solutions to the country's crushing debt.

The House approved last Tuesday evening a concurrent resolution providing for the creation of a Congressional Commission on Debt to audit all loans incurred by the present and past governments, and review debt policies.

Members of the Freedom from Debt Coalition, which lobbied for the measure for two years, broke into applause at the House gallery Tuesday night as the chamber voted for the measure, which was principally authored by Rep. Edcel Lagman (Aksyon, Albay).

"The House did the Filipino people proud," FDC said in a statement. "The ball is now in the Senate's court."

The chamber unanimously voted in favor of House Joint Resolution No. 2, which will now await the approval by the Senate of its counterpart measure.

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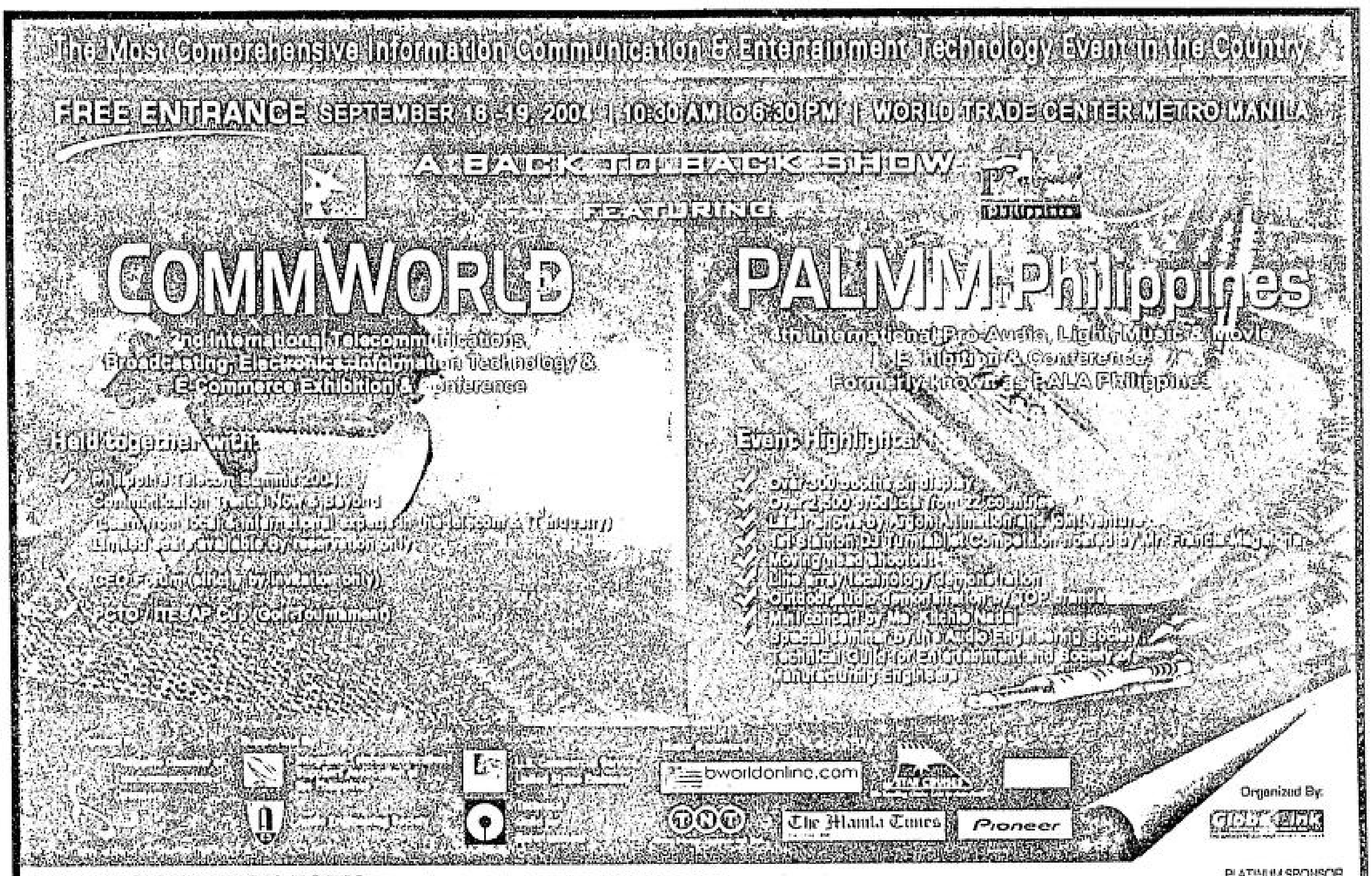

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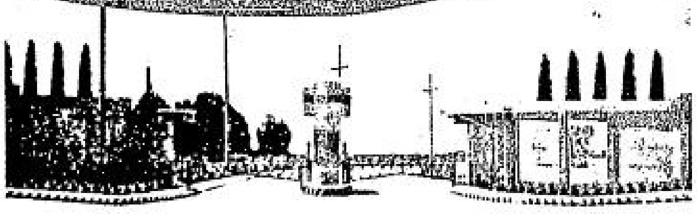

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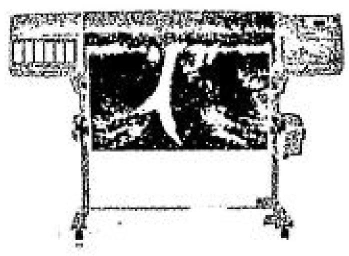

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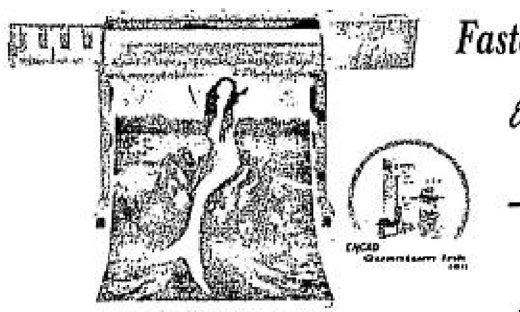

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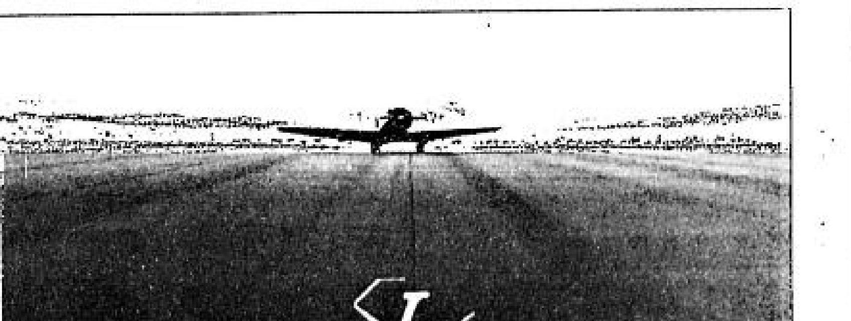

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IFC to help RP gov't raise $800M in investments for LRT extension

By Doris C. Dumlao

INTERNATIONAL Finance Corp., the investment arm of the World Bank, has committed to help the Philippines raise $800 million in fresh investments for the extension of the Light Railway Transit 1 system.

In a statement issued yesterday, IFC said it had received an advisory services mandate from the Philippine government to support the mobilization of private investments to build, maintain and manage the LRT-1 extension in Manila.

"In the face of the traffic congestion at the core of Metro Manila and a rapidly growing urban population, this project has enormous economic development potential in the Philippines," said IFC Philippines country manager Vipul Bhagat.

The LRT-1 extension project was initiated through an unsolicited offer to the government from SNC Lavalin International of Canada. But in accordance with the Build-Operate-Transfer Law, the project is subject to a comparative and competitive proposal process, often referred to as a Swiss challenge.

"The Swiss challenge should provide a major contribution to ensuring transparency in and effectiveness of the delivery of public services in the Philippines, and we are pleased to support this process with IFC's global infrastructure experience and commitment to achieving high standards and benefits for local communities," he said.

IFC's advisory services director Bernard Sheahan added: "By offering commuters a positive mass transport alternative, this project should help reduce air pollution and improve everyday life for Manila residents who rely on public transportation."

The project will expand the existing 15- kilometer LRT Line 1 by another 12 kilometers south from the existing Baclaran station. Expansion will include a station at Manila International Airport, as well as nine others.

The new stations will incorporate intermodal facilities, such as bus depots and pedestrian links, to encourage patronage and promote reduced automobile traffic in the core areas of Metro Manila through a convenient mass transport alternative.

IFC's role is to promote transparency, add credibility to the concession and bring global expertise in designing an award process that encourages established infrastructure investors. It will advise on the appropriate implementation of this Swiss challenge by assisting in organizing an "open, transparent and competitive" bidding process.

Over the last 40 years, IFC has assisted the government in promoting private sector development. Recently, it was awarded an advisory mandate to promote rural power distribution.

IFC finances private sector investments in developing countries, mobilizes capital in the international financial markets, helps clients improve social and environmental sustainability, and provides technical assistance and advice to governments and businesses.

Security Bank adopts SmartVista

BANKING Production Center (BPC), a leading electronic payments and e-business solutions provider and system integrator, said Security Bank Corp. had gone live after the first phase of implementation of SmartVista Suite.

SmartVista is an IT-based solution that provides single and combined platforms for the processing of local and international credit and debit cards.

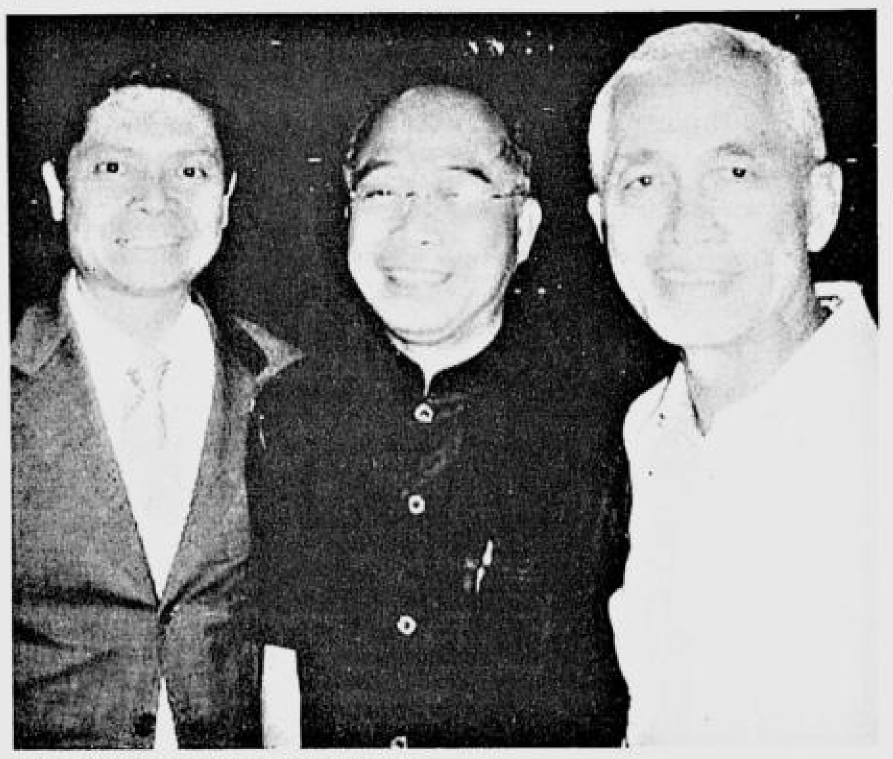
The first phase of the project called for the installation of the SmartVista transaction switching system (SmartVista Front-End).

Following the certification of SmartVista solution with BankNet's payment scheme, BPC has migrated all ATM cards into the new system, which should eventually improve Security Bank's efficiency by consolidating its transactions from multiple channels and payment networks into a single system.

Security Bank first vice president and head of information technology group Daniel Yu said the solution transformed the ATMs into complete financial machines.

SmartVista brings down the cost of card operation through fewer running platforms, translating to improved profitability and better service.

"Our relationship with Security Bank represents our entry into Asia Pacific financial services marketplace and has opened existing opportunities for us in the region," Alexey Domidov, chief operating officer of BPC International, said.



MEN-AT-WORK FOR MORE JOBS
Secretary Luis Lorenzo (left), presidential adviser for jobs generation and LandBank chair, LandBank president Gary Teves (right) and League of Provinces president and Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado reaffirm their strong partnership in efforts to create more jobs. According to Lorenzo, "I am very comfortable working with LBP president Teves as we have aligned objectives for countryside development and we both grew up in the province." Lorenzo and Teves will closely work with the LGUs to help President Arroyo attain her 10-point agenda, which they underscored during a gathering of the League of Provinces of the Philippines.

₱1/pack tax increase on cigarettes pushed

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AMERICAN tobacco giant Philip Morris is urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to slap a P1 per pack tax increase on all cigarette brands to raise as much as P4.5 billion a year in additional revenue.

Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc. managing director Chris J. Nelson made the appeal when he, along with 50 other members of the US-Asean Business Council, met with President Arroyo during lunch yesterday in Malacañang.

"I think tax increases are inevitable like death and it is critical that we get the right increase," Nelson told reporters.

Based on Philip Morris' proposal, all cigarette brands regardless of price, would be slapped a P1 tax on the first year and 50 centavos yearly in the the succeeding years.

"A flat rate would allow everybody to pay the same amount of increase, unlike the indexation of taxes which distorts the system and widens the gaps," he said.

Nelson said that while the government could end up with less revenue than it was expecting from the indexation of taxes, he said the flat rate would generate P4.5 billion in additional revenue in just the first year.

Nelson said the Department of Finance, which had previously pushed for an indexation of sin taxes, had advocated a single tier tax for the industry during its latest presentation to lawmakers

Nelson said his main concern was to prevent the tax increase from stalling the industry's development.

"Too sharp an excise-driven price increase could lead to significant distortions. In other countries, such as France, where they had severe tax increases, the total market is down 25 percent," Nelson said.

Philip Morris claimed that it had accounted for close to 40 percent of total taxes paid by the industry last year even though it only had a market share of 25 percent.

The DOF wants to amend the reforms introduced in the Comprehensive Tax Reform Law of 1997 that have led to a steep drop in government collections because most consumers merely shifted to low priced brands. Based on the existing tax scheme, low-priced cigarettes with a net retail price of less than P5 per pack are levied P1.12 per pack; medium-priced packs worth between P5 and P6.50 are charged another P5.60; high-end cigarettes with a net retail price of between P6.50 and P10 per pack are levied P8.96; and premium brands priced above P10 are taxed P13.44.

Cell phone insurance promises peace of mind

From page B1

cell phone insurance scheme in Southeast Asia.

A subsidiary of leading automobile insurer Standard Insurance, eStandard was formed to develop new and non-traditional insurance products. Txt2Protect, its first product, is about as non-traditional as it gets.

The customer benefit, however, is a familiar one: peace of mind.

"By insuring their cell phones, people need not to worry anymore if they encounter snatchers in the streets," Echauz said.

European model

Patterned after the cell phone insurance models in Europe, Txt2Protect insures the phone against loss through robbery or snatching. It also covers phone damages caused by accidents.

Fittingly, Txt2Protect is available through text messaging.

If one texts eStandard for a quote, one will receive a message detailing the amount to be paid, a reference number and a set of instructions. Insurance payments are received in any Metrobank or Equitable PCI Bank branch. (One can also pay directly to Standard Insurance.)

Insurance premium is calculated based on the value of the cell phone's brand and model.

All premiums are paid as one-time policies and are valid for only one year. In this way, Echauz said, obsolescence of phone models will not be an issue, given that companies like Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Motorola and Samsung, come out with new phone models almost every quarter.

In case of loss, eStandard will replace the cell phone with the exact same model. If the original model is no longer available, a phone of the same value will be given.

In case of accidental damages, eStandard will shoulder the cost of phone repair.

Claims are processed like car insurance claims. The owner needs to present a police report of the loss, undergoes a set of routine questions and, if everything is in order, claims his phone in three to five working days.

Feasible plan

Echauz says two major factors helped make TxtProtect feasible in the country.

First, the phenomenal growth of the cell phone market. Telcos now estimate that over 27 million Filipinos, old and young alike, own a cell phone.

Second, cell phones have become indispensable in our daily life, whether in work or school, in relationships with family and friends.

"You could leave you wallet at home and not realize it until you have to pay for something. But if you leave your phone, you would realize it the moment you board a bus or ride your car," Echauz said.

Past surveys have already shown Filipinos' attachment to cell phones.

Txt2Protect is open to anybody with an insurable phone, whose models are still available in the market.

"We could not insure old or phased out phones because we won't be able to replace them when they get lost or stolen," Echauz said.

To date, eStandard has received thousands of text messages and call inquiries regarding Txt2Protect. But Echauz knows that an inquiry does not necessarily lead to an insurance policy.

"Txt2Protect Cell phone ,insurance will hopefully serve as a catalyst to make the Filipinos realize the value of insurance protection," he said.

To get an insurance quote, key in INSURE <space> BRAND <space>MODEL and send to 2333 for Globe/Touch Mobile subscribers and to 283 for Smart/Talk'NText subscribers.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of September 15, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.25	17	17.25	17,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45	45.5	44	44.5	1,133,800
China Banking Corp.	535	535	525	535	15,040
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	27	27.5	656,800
Philippine National Bank	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	12,000
Phil. Savings Bank	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	10,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	3,600
Security Bank Corp.	21.75	21.75	21.75	21.75	5,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	25	25	25	25	16,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	8,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2385	2395	2385	2395	160
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	118	118	118	118	40
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1580	1580	1580	1580	1,120
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	13,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.66	0.66	1,600,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1040	1050	1020	1020	11,330
Ipeople Inc.	1.6	1.64	1.6	1.62	148,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.048	24,500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	540,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.42	2.42	2.4	2.4	21,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	4,244,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.23	0.25	0.23	0.25	90,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1385	1390	1365	1370	85,280
Ivantage Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.63	0.64	1,620,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	4,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.5	1,400
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	23.75	23.25	23.5	616,000
Petron Corp.	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.7	541,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	181,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1,000,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	2.16	2.18	2.16	2.16	1,003,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	4.55	4.55	4.45	4.45	3,782,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Cement Corp.	0.52	0.55	0.52	0.55	50,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	120,000
Union Cement Corp.	2.42	2.42	2.28	2.3	8,957,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.9	2.95	2.9	2.9	149,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29	29	29	29	33,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	347,200
RFM Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	10,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	28,300
San Miguel Corp. B	70	70.5	70	70	33,000
Universal Robina Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	303,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	190,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.005	0.0055	0.005	0.0055	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	6,419,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	207,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.032	0.033	0.03	0.032	6,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	30,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	14.75	14.75	14.25	14.5	32,800
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.55	0.57	0.55	0.57	7,190,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	6,460,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.15	0.15	0.145	0.15	5,630,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.04	2.14	2.04	2.14	4,545,000
Ever-GotesCo Resources	0.033	0.034	0.033	0.034	1,900,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	710,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05	15,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26.5	27.5	26.5	27.5	285,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	6,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	30,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	10,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.4	1.48	1.4	1.46	637,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.18	1.2	1,371,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.52	0.54	0.49	0.54	74,280,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.16	760,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17	2,050,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.185	0.2	240,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	6	6	6	6	1,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	3,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	2,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1	1	1	1	5,010,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bella Corp.	0.69	0.71	0.69	0.71	3,300,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.55	0.58	0.55	0.58	100,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.35	7,810,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	54,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,400
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	430	430	430	430	1,220
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	9,089,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	10,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.38	0.41	0.37	0.41	14,560,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	70,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.34	10,950,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.02	1.04	2,929,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.0875	0.0875	0.0875	0.0875	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	1,780,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	700,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	244,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	5,687,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	17,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3	3	3	3	28,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.52	1.74	1.52	1.74	323,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	470,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	61,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.017	40,300,000
OmiCo.Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	431,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	5,800,000
Interport Res. B	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	60,000,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	8,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	8,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.032	0.033	0.032	0.032	4,100,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,889,160	80,128,420
Comm'l & Ind'l	231,028,730	339,245,895
PRO	46,119,000	103,153,960.0
Mining	550,521,000	5,075,950
OIL	78,908,000	578,300.00
GRAND TOTALS :	908,465,890	528,182,525

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	485.40	DOWN 0.96
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,724.09	DOWN 18.61
PRO	573.14	UP 0.86
Mining	1,826.47	DOWN 3.66
OIL	1.61	DOWN 0.03
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,072.69	UP 1.59
Composite	1,706.08	DOWN .37

NO. OF ADVANCES: 33, NO. OF ECLINES: 33, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 44, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 110, NO. OF TRADES: 2,639

DISCLOSURES

AT ITS annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 15, **Alliance Global Group Inc.** reelected Andrew Tan, George Yang, Winston Co, Danilo Utanes, Cherryll Yu and Renato Piezas to its board. Alejo Villanueva Jr., independent director, was also reelected.

* * *

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. (ILI) purchased 1,000 shares of ILIB at P1.90 per share on Sept. 14, pursuant to its share buyback program.

* * *

PRIME Media Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 30 at 9:00 a.m. on the 12th floor of BDO Plaza, 8737 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

* * *

CONCRETE Aggregates Corp. sold an idle piece of land at the North Reclamation in Cebu City for P20.128 million to FEP Printing Corp. on Sept. 9.

Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

September 15, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.816393	1.000000	56.1960
Japan	Yen	0.007446	0.009121	0.5126
United Kingdom	Pound	1.466487	1.796300	100.9449
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104694	0.128240	7.2066
Switzerland	Franc	0.648394	0.794218	44.6319
Canada	Dollar	0.631199	0.773156	43.4483
Singapore	Dollar	0.482844	0.591436	33.2363
Australia	Dollar	0.574560	0.703779	39.5496
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.165614	2.652661	149.0689
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217711	0.266674	14.9860
Brunei	Dollar	0.481421	0.589692	33.1383
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000110	0.0062
Thailand	Baht	0.019796	0.024248	1.3626
UAE	Dirham	0.222269	0.272257	15.2998
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.224900	68.8345
Argentina	Peso	0.272586	0.333890	18.7633
Brazil	Real	0.280355	0.343407	19.2981
Denmark	Kroner	0.134401	0.164628	9.2514
India	Rupee	0.017845	0.021858	1.2283
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214869	0.263193	14.7904
Mexico	New Peso	0.070647	0.086535	4.8629
New Zealand	Dollar	0.541195	0.662910	37.2529
Norway	Kroner	0.119233	0.146049	8.2074
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013901	0.017027	0.9568
South Africa	Rand	0.126049	0.154397	8.6765
Korea	Won	0.000713	0.000873	0.0491
Sweden	Kroner	0.109901	0.134618	7.5650
Syria	Pound	0.022598	0.027678	1.5554
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024115	0.029538	1.6599
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000426	0.000522	0.0293

IBB

Marketing Assistant, Philippines

The International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), a part of the United States Government, is looking for a Marketing Assistant in Manila to perform a wide variety of routine marketing related activities. The IBB includes the Voice of America radio and television service, one of the largest newsgathering organizations in the world and a leader in providing news and entertainment programs around the globe.

Applicant MUST have an in-depth knowledge of the media environment in the Philippines; 3 years experience working for a broadcast station; excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills; be able to travel occasionally; be fluent in spoken and written English; be able to work independently with little supervision. Applicant must be mature, resourceful, have initiative, etc.

Responsibilities: Assist Regional Marketing Director (RMO) in Bangkok; Maintain close contacts with regional/U.S. IBB offices; Update IBB affiliate database; Monitor and research media developments in the Philippines; monitor VOA broadcast on various stations in the Philippines; arrange for equipment installation; write weekly reports; negotiate rebroadcast agreements & perform other duties as assigned.

Fax your detailed resumé and letter to Joyce Ngoh at 66-2-205-5707, send by email to jmngoh@ibb-bkk.org or mail it to *IBB, The Millennia Bldg., Rm 1501, 62 Langsuan Rd., Bangkok 10330, Thailand.* Applications must be received by close of business on September 24, 2004.

Republic of the Philippines
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
10th Judicial Region
Branch 30
Surigao City

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR THE CHANGE OF NAME FROM MARIA CORISA BAUTISTA TO CORISA BAUTISTA AND CORRECTION OF ENTIRES IN HER BIRTH RECORD

CORISA BAUTISTA BENITEZ,
Petitioner,
- versus -
THE LOCAL CIVIL REGISTRAR
OF CEBU CITY,
Respondent.

SP. PROC. NO. 6278

x-----------------------------x

ORDER

A verified petition has been filed by petitioner Corisa Bautista Benitez through her counsel, on 21 July 2004, praying for the change of said petitioner's first name as well as for the correction of erroneous entries regarding the latter's gender and also the surname of her mother, all appearing in her birth record on file with the Office of the Local Civil Registrar of Cebu City, alleging among others:

"That petitioner was born on 18 November 1954 at Cebu City to spouses Isagani Bautista and Corazon Kamo; that the fact of birth of petitioner was duly registered in the Office of the Local Civil Registrar of Cebu City; that in the said birth record, the first name of petitioner was entered as "Maria Corisa"; that since "petitioner's birth until the present the latter has been using habitually, continuously and actually the first name Corisa; that in the same birth record, the sex of the petitioner as well as the maiden surname of her mother were erroneously entered as "male" and "Camo", respectively; that such entries are erroneous because petitioner's true and correct sex as well as the maiden surname of her mother are "Female" and "Kamo", respectively; and, that petitioner wanted to change her first name as well as desires to correct the erroneous entries concerning her sex and the maiden surname of her mother, all appearing in her birth record in order to avoid any unwarranted confusion. Hence, this petition."

Finding the petition to be sufficient in form and substance, the same is hereby given due course and set for hearing on 22 October 2004, at 8:30 o'clock in the morning, at the Session Hall of this Court, Hall of Justice Bldg., Surigao City, at which date, time and place any interested person may appear and show cause, if he has any, why this petition should not be granted.

Accordingly, the petitioner is hereby ordered to publish this order once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the entire Philippines before the above-scheduled hearing of this petition at her own expense.

Let copy of this order be furnished the Office of the Local Civil Registrar of Cebu City. Likewise, let copy of this Order and the petition be also furnished the Office of the Solicitor-General, Makati City, all for their information and appropriate action.

SO ORDERED.

Given in Chambers this 12th day of August 2004 at Surigao City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) FLORIPINAS C. BUYSER
Presiding Judge

(PDI--Sept. 16, 23 & 30, 2004)

NOTICE OF TRANSFER

Office & Factory of
FAR EASTERN INTERNATIONAL GARMENTS, INC.

From: Bldg. 5 cor. Bagsakan Ave. & Sirloin Road FTI Compd. Taguig, Metro Manila
To: 100 MARCOS ALVAREZ AVENUE TALON 1, LAS PIÑAS CITY

Telephone No. 8058524 / 8058526 / 8052432
FAX No.: 8052433
E-mail address: sol-fei@compass.com.ph

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROAD NETWORK OF THE PORO POINT COMMERCIAL COMPLEX (PPCC)

The Poro Point Management Corporation (PPMC) invites interested contractors, with a Large B License (General Engineering GE-1 Road, Highway pavement, Railways, Airport horizontal structures and Bridges) as accredited by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB), to submit Application for Eligibility, and subsequently to bid, if eligible, for the Construction of the Road Network of the PPCC, Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone, Poro, San Fernando City, La Union.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of P 65,600,000.00 shall come from PPMC corporate funds.

Eligibility forms shall be made available to interested contractors on the dates and place mentioned below upon payment of a non-refundable amount of five thousand pesos (P5,000.00).

Schedule of Procurement Activities

Activity	Dates	Time	Place
Issuance of Eligibility Statement Form	September 23, 2004 to September 24, 2004	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	PPMC Office, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Deadline for Submission of Letter of Intent and Eligibility Statement Form	September 30, 2004	2:00 p.m.	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union
Issuance of Instructions to Bidders and other Bid Documents	October 22, 2004	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	PPMC Office, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Pre-Bid Conference and Site Inspection	November 10, 2004	2:00 p.m.	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union
Submission and Opening of Bids	November 22, 2004	9:00 a.m.	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union

Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria. Thus, only eligible firms shall be invited to participate in the bidding. All Bids shall be evaluated in accordance with R.A. 9184 and its IRR-A.

Should you need any further information or clarification regarding the Project, you may contact Engr. Jose B. Karganilla at Telephone No. (072) 888-59-54.

(Sgd.) ANTHONY C. MANGUIAT
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – September 9 & 16, 2004)

PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Building I, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Nos.: 893-6001 to 47 local 2101-2104
Direct Line: 840-2024/Fax No.: (632) 840-1459

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites interested contractors to apply for pre-qualification and submit sealed bids for the **SECURITY SERVICES of PNOC EC Malangas Coal Terminal (MT04-1302).** PNOC EC Malangas Coal Terminal is located at Km. 9, Diplahan, Zamboanga, Sibugay Province.

The approved budget for this contract is Php 3,433,482.24 chargeable against PNOC EC funds. The contract duration is two (2) years.

Pre-Qualification and Bid Documents shall be available for issuance at the above address from the Contracts Assistant (c/o Mr. Carlos L. Mejias or Mr. George N. Alejandro) starting **September 10, 2004** upon payment of non-refundable fee of PESOS: One Thousand Five Hundred (PHP 1,500.00).

The bidding shall utilize a two (2) sealed envelope system. The first envelope shall contain the Technical Bid and the second envelope shall contain the Financial Bid. The Technical and Financial Bids shall be submitted in two (2) sets each to the Bids and Awards Committee not later than **3:00 P.M. of October 14, 2004** at the PNOC EC Conference Room located at the above address and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter. **Late Bids shall not be accepted.**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **September 28, 2004, 2:00 P.M.** at the PNOC EC Conference Room, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bids or to award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to PNOC EC.

This publication is also posted in our website at www.pnoc-ec.com.ph and in the DBM website at www.procurementservice.net.

(Sgd.) Ernesto S. San Jose
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Sept. 16, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Regional Office 6
Bgy. Quintin Salas, Jaro, Iloilo City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **National Food Authority, Region 6**, with its office at Brgy. Quintin Salas, Jaro, Iloilo City invites all interested Private Security Agencies (PSAs) with established operations and office in Western Visayas to register, apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision of security services in Region 6.

The Application Forms for Registration may be obtained from RBAC Secretariat c/o Marilou M. Paguntalan, 2nd Floor, Iloilo Regional Office after payment of non-refundable Application Fee of P500.00.

Only those PSAs which have been registered with NFA may obtain from RBAC Secretariat, the Eligibility and Bid documents upon payment of additional non-transferable, non-refundable Eligibility Bidding Fee of P1,000.00.

Pre-Bidding Conference and the Bidding Proper shall be conducted at the NFA Iloilo Regional Office Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Jaro, Iloilo City, on the following schedule:

Activities	Date	Time
1. Issuance of Application Forms For Registration	Sept. 16-30, 2004	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
2. Issuance of Eligibility & Bid Documents	Oct. 7 - Nov. 7, 2004	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
3. Pre-Bidding Conference	Nov. 08, 2004	9:00 AM
4. Bidding Proper	Nov. 26, 2004	9:00 AM

For more details, please contact RBAC Chairperson or Ms. Marilou M. Paguntalan at Telephone Nos. (033) 320-6246 and 329-2165.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BID PROPOSALS, TO WAIVE ANY REQUIRED FORMALITY OR DEFECT THEREIN AND MAY ACCEPT THE BID WHICH IS DEEMED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) JAVIER P. LOZADA, JR.
Regional Director

(PDI - Sept. 16 & 23, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City

Invitation for Bids

ICB No.: SEMP2TEEP-1-2004-TX
Invitation for Bids No.: 1-2004-TX

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), toward the cost of the Second Social Expenditure Management Project (SEMP2) and Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP), and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the contract for Procurement of Printing only and Delivery of Textbooks in Mathematics.
2. The Department of Education (DepED) now invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for the printing only from camera-ready-copy and delivery of the following **Textbooks** to Public Elementary School Districts and High Schools under SEMP2 and TEEP Provinces:

Item No.	Subject & Level	Quantity in Copies	No. of Pages	Category
	Elementary:			
1	Mathematics 1	8,254	440	Lesson Guides
	Mathematics 2	8,170	432	Lesson Guides
	Mathematics 3	7,354	592	Lesson Guides
	Mathematics 4	7,029	424	Lesson Guides
	Mathematics 5	6,037	432	Lesson Guides
	Mathematics 6	5,893	512	Lesson Guides
2	Mathematics 3	321,020	256	Textbooks
	High School:			
3	Mathematics IV	902,608	336	Textbooks
	Total	1,266,365		

Estimated Printing and Delivery Completion Period: 150 days. Indicative Printing and Delivery Dates: March to July, 2005.

3. A margin of preference shall be granted to Textbooks manufactured in Purchaser's country for purposes of bid price comparison only.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from DepED and inspect the Bidding Documents at BAC Secretariat, Room 112-A, Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Pasig City, Philippines, Tel. Nos. (632) 6339343 / 6366542 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. starting **September 22, 2004.** Information is also available at **http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org.**
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon submission of a written application to the address given below and payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php3,000.00 or US$55.00. The method of payment will be cash, cashier's check, manager's check or certified check. The Bidding Documents will be sent by mail. No liability will be accepted for loss or late delivery.
6. A pre-bid conference shall be conducted on **October 8, 2004 at 2:00 p.m** at the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal I Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address indicated in par. 6, at or before 10:00 a.m. on **October 26, 2004.** A bid security shall be required equivalent to not less than 2.5% of the bid price, in Philippine peso or in any freely convertible currency of eligible countries. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened and in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address, date and time indicated in the Bidding Documents.

(Sgd.) JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ
Undersecretary and Chairperson,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – September 9 & 16, 2004)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee – Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP/G-EPS registered companies, contractors and other interested suppliers to a public bidding for:

1-Lot Supply and delivery of Slotted Angle Steel Racks for four (4) rooms of Supervision and Examination Department I per BSP specifications
Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) – P3,818,000.00
Delivery Period: **Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the Purchase Order**

Bid documents are available from 13 September 2004 to 21 September 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,900.00 at the following:

BAC Secretariat
Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building
Cor. A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Sts., Malate, Manila
Tel. No(s) 523-2875; 523-9463

Pre-Bid Conference to be held on **24 September 2004** 10:00 A.M. at Rm. MR2A
Bidding Date and Time : **6 October 2004** not later than 10:00 A.M.
Place : Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-storey Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes:

Envelope No. 1:

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers
2. Y2003 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet)
3. Y2003 Income Tax Return duly stamped/received by BIR or its authorized agent Banks
4. Taxpayer's Identification Number
5. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License
6. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid; or a cash deposit certificate. The commitment or deposit certificate shall be in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC
   *NFCC = [(Current Assets – Current Liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects: K = 10
7. Duly notarized statement that the firm is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation
8. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check.
9. Duly notarized certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original.
10. List of clients for similar supply contract complete with names of contact person, address and telephone/fax no.
11. Sworn affidavit of the bidder that he or she or any officer of their corporation is not related to the head of the procuring entity by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

Envelope No. 2:

1. Instructions to Bidders
2. Certification of Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the bidding
3. Original Bid Security

Envelope No. 3:

Price Proposal

All envelopes shall be dropped in the bid box located at Rm. MR2A, 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex. **LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

The BSP assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) Ma. DOLORES B. YUVIENCO
Chairperson

(PDI – September 16, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Cebu City

NOTICE OF AUCTION

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)** Region VII, Cebu City invites all reputable sugar traders, industrial users and other interested buyers to submit a sealed offer for the Auction of 89,418.84 Lkg of RAW SUGAR "B". This stock is stored at one (1) Sugar Central in Central Visayas and is offered for sale on an "ex-sugarmill, as-is where-is and take all basis with an indicative price set at Ps780.00 per Lkg:

PROVINCE	SUGAR CENTRAL	QUANTITY (In Lkg)
Negros Oriental	Central Azucarera de Bais (CAB) Bais City, Negros Oriental	89,418.84

All interested offerors are required to post a Bond equivalent to 10% of the total amount offered in the form of Cash/Manager's/Cashier's Check payable to NFA.

Interested buyers shall submit the following documents to the Committee during the pre-auction conference:

1. Certified photocopy of DTI Registration for Single Proprietorship; SEC/CDA Registration for partnership / corporation / cooperative and Mayor's Permit;
2. Duly notarized Special Power of Attorney from the single proprietor or Board Resolution from the secretary/chairman certifying that the representative is presently connected with the entity as an official/employee/stockholder and is authorized to represent the same in the auction and all activities pertinent therein.

Terms and Conditions and Tender Forms relative to the auction can be secured at the Committee Secretariat, NFA, Cebu Regional Office, Cebu City after payment of a non-refundable fee of Ps500.00 The NFA encourages all interested offerors to conduct an ocular inspection of the subject sugar stock prior to the pre-auction conference. Issuance of Bidding documents will be from September 18, 2004 to not later than 2:00 p.m. of September 20, 2004.

A ***pre-auction conference*** is set at ***2:00 p.m. on September 20, 2004*** at the 2nd Floor, NFA, Banilad, Cebu City The ***submission and opening*** of sealed offers immediately follows after the pre-auction conference. In case of failure, another auction shall be conducted on September 27, 2004 at the same time and venue and every Monday thereafter until the subject stock shall have been completely disposed.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all offers, waive any informalities or defects found therein, and accept only such offers which, in its judgment, is deemed most advantageous to the National Food Authority.

(Sgd.) PIOLITO C. SANTOS
Asst. Reg'l Director / Chairman, Auction Committee

(PDI - Sept 16 & 22, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

Interested parties are invited to prequalify and bid for the selection of proponents in the planning, development and management under a lease agreement of the:

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES (UP) DILIMAN TOWN CENTER

The UP Diliman Land Use Plan designates a commercial zone of approximately 14,186.80 square meters, bounded by Laurel Apacible, Valenzuela and Roces Streets, UP Diliman Campus, Quezon City. The UP Diliman Town Center Project is intended to replace, upgrade and expand the existing shopping center.

Prequalification forms and Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained from the UP Diliman Development and Planning Committee (DPC) Secretariat, Director's Office, Institute for Small-Scale Industries (4/F Virata Hall / ISSI Bldg.) University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,000.00 from September 20 to 24, 2004. Deadline of submission of duly accomplished prequalification documents will be on October 8, 2004. After the evaluation of the documents submitted, the prequalified proponents shall be duly notified of the schedule of subsequent activities. For inquiries, please contact Tel. No. 920-5301 to 99 local 4717. Tel/Fax No. 920-5923 or Tel. No. 927-9238 (c/o Ms. Ludy Cubillas); e-mail: lourdes.cubillas@up.edu.ph

(Sgd.) EMERLINDA R. ROMAN
Chancellor

(PDI – September 16 & 22, 2004)

CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Macanaya District, Aparri, Cagayan
Tel. No. (078) 888-2173 • Telefax No. (078) 822-8900
E-mail:cagelco2main@digitelone.com

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Cagayan II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the following materials and equipment:

1. **WOOD POLES/CONCRETE POLES/STEEL POOLS, WIRES, TRANSFORMERS AND LINE MATERIALS**
2. **TOTAL SOLUTION SOFTWARE**

To be qualified, bidder must have fully complied with the following:

1. Accreditation requirements: (for submission to PBAC Chairman, Mrs. Blandina Y. Madamba)
   a) Company Profile
   b) Business Registration
   c) Business Permit
   d) BIR/VAT Certificate
   e) Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
   f) List of Clients for a period of 3 years, if applicable
2) Must be able to pay P2,000.00 (for this particular biding only and not refundable) for the bid documents during the pre-bidding conference.

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accept proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or, losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Pre-bid conference and bidding schedules shall be informed to all qualified bidders through fax and mails.

Deadline of submission of requirements –September 24, 2004

(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. TORDESILLAS
General Manager

For expansions of lines in the following areas (Item No. 1):

1. 2 locations in the 1st District of Cagayan
2. 5 locations in the 2nd District of Cagayan
3. 10 locations at Lower Apayao

(PDI – September 9 & 16, 2004)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
JOBMarket ONLINE
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www.jobmarketonline.com

FEDERATION OF FILIPINO-CHINESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, INC.

會總聯商華菲

years of leadership, commitment & service.

The Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. was established on March 29, 1954 as a non-stock, non-profit organization. The Federation's paramount objectives are: to foster and encourage the development and growth of trade and industries in the Philippines; to cultivate, promote, and enhance friendly relations between members; to cooperate with the Philippine Government in the implementation of its national policies; to foster and support the development and growth of economic developments and other programs that will promote the progress of our nation.

Through the years, the Federation has been diligently extending its services to the members, at the same time, working for the welfare of all people, regardless of race or nationality. The services are not restricted on business and trade. It also deals with almost every aspect of mankind's living properly observed globalize freedom, and standards or mutual understanding and genuine friendship. Having a strict organizational structure, the Board of Directors takes charge in policy-making. It has now 39 directors with two years of term. Officers also participate in decision-making.

MESSAGES

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
PRESIDENT

I convey my warmest felicitations to the officers and members of the **Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII)** on the celebration of their *50th Anniversary.*

In the five decades since its establishment, FFCCCII has been a reliable partner of the government in the gigantic task of nation building. As an association of businessmen and entrepreneurs, it plays a significant role in pushing forward the engine of Philippine progress.

Of particular importance is its flagship project "Operation: Barrio Schools," a private sector school building program which has been at work since the 1960s. I am pleased to note that it has donated a total of 3,000 schools, with many of these located in far-flung areas that are in dire need of schools.

I thank FFCCCII for its invaluable services to the country. I am counting on your support of our government's initiatives especially my admiration's ten-point legacy designed to assure our people the benefits of socio economic progress in he next six years. Happy anniversary and *Mabuhay kayong lahat!*

Noli
NOLI "KABAYAN" L. DE CASTRO
VICE PRESIDENT

Greetings! Congratulations to the **Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc.** on its 50th Anniversary.

The past five decades have been full of achievements for FFCCCII. It has come a long way from simply a business organization to being one of the most active partners of government in nation building.

From business promotion to delivery of people's basic needs-the impact of FFCCCII's numerous program and projects are immeasurable. As the big brother of the Chinese-Filipino community, the FFCCCII has helped the community preserve its culture and tradition but at the same time promoted integration into mainstream society.

I congratulate FFCCCII for its achievements in the past, and I wish it success in all its future endeavors. *Mabuhay Kayong Lahat!*

FRANKLIN M. DRILON
SENATE PRESIDENT

I am honored to congratulate most warmly the officers and members of the **Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII)** on the **Golden Annivesary** celebration of this prestigious civic organization.

FFCCCII and its leader can sit back and take pride in their enviable record of achievement in the last half century of worthy service to the country and our people. Its humanitarian are too numerous to enumerate. Suffice to say, FFCCCII's prompt presence to give succor to victims of natural calamities and disasters are truly admirable. Its school building program is unparalleled in its magnitude and in its unrelentless pursuit. It has provided the leadership in rallying the Chinese community to move in step with the visions and aspirations of the Filipino people.

FFCCCII has truly earned the gratitude and goodwill of the Filipino people for reaching out to the needy and extending a hand to the poor.

Mabuhay!

JOSE DE VENECIA JR.
SPEAKER

On the 50th founding anniversary of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I convey my heartfelt gratitude to your officers and members for the FFCCCII's many accomplishments that have made people's lives better.

Because of your size-as perhaps the country's biggest ethnic Chinese-Filipino organization-your Federation has been a major economic influence and a unifying social force, through five decades.

Many have observed that the Federation has gone beyond matters of commerce and trade-although in this area its contributions are nothing but major and have merited public acclaim. Noteworthy of these are civic and humanitarian projects and endeavors for which it has earned the lasting goodwill and gratitude of our people.

Your Federation has been blessed with a strong membership and a compassionate leadership, helping redefine the meaning of service and social empowerment. This is the strength which you must continue to nurture.

Congratulations!

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
MAYOR

In behalf of the people of the City of Manila, I extend warmest congratulations to the Federation of **Filipino-Chinese of Commerce and and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII)** on its **Golden Anniversary** celebration.

Manileños will long remember the deep commitment and selfless concern that FFCCCII has shown. It inspired and initiated the founding of Chinese volunteer fire brigades in Manila that helped saved lives and property from destructive fires. Our brothers in depressed areas are the beneficiaries of its Operation: Mobile Clinic that provided free medical and dental assistance. Our police district improved its police mobility by FFCCCII's donation of brand new police cars. Manila too received its share of schools donated under FFCCCII's project " Operation: Barrio Schools"

The steadfast effort of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. to provide socio-civic services on top its contributions to the country's economic progress deserves the city's highest commendation and recognition.

My administration continues to pursue development in all area of the City, believing that only through development can we hurdle the greatest challenge that we face today: that all of liberating our country from the clutches of poverty. This is a challenge I pose to the FFCCCII: That we jointly commit to work towards a tomorrow where each Filipino is gainfully employed and enjoying a full life that he deserves. Through much has been done in our accelerating urban renewal program, with FFCCCII on our side, much more can be achieved.

We in the city government hope for the success of the success of this and your future endeavors.

BUHAYIN NATIN ANG MAYNILA upang maging huwaran ang bansa! MABUHAY!

Officer of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. 2003 - 2005

Dr. Lucio C. Tan
Emeritus President

John K.C. Ng
Honorable President

Domingo Le
Honorable President

Yao Eng Hue
Honorabe President

Jimmy T. Tang
Honorable President

Vicente Yu
Honorable President

Robin C. Sy
President

Francis Chua
Executive Vice President

Robert Siy Chin
Vice President

John K. Tan
Vice President

Vicente Sitosta
Vice President

Tan Tian Siong
Vice President

Henry Ah
Vice President

Alfonso G. Siy
Vice President

William Cobuchong
Board Member/Treasurer

Tan Ching
Board Member/Auditor

Atty. Jose Ngaw
Secretary General/ Corporate Secretary

Vicente Tan
Deputy Secretary General

Committees & Head Committee

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Henry Lim Bon Liong

PEACE & SUB COMMITTEE
John C. Kaw

TRADE & INDUSTRY COMMITTEE
Alfonso A. Uy

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Benjamin Co

TAX & BUSINESS ADVOCACY COMMITTEE
Peter Coliangco

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE
She Ling Tan

WELFARE COMMITTEE
Enrique T. Chua

ARBITRATION COMMITTEE
Angel Tan

AGRICULTURA & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITEE
Ong Eng Chan

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE
Tan Ching

EDUCATION & CULTURE COMMITTEE
William Chan

YOUTH & INTEGRATION COMMITTEE
Angel Ngu

MEDIA & PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
Elpidio T. Duca

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Ng Siu Seng

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE
Alfredo M. Yao

THE FEDERATION HAS THREE CLASSES OF MEMBERS:

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MR. ROBIN C. SY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGES

Greetings! Celebrate with us the 50th Anniversary of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc.

During our 50 years of existence, the Federation has channeled its efforts in promoting the growth of business and implementing social welfare projects that bring about growth and prosperity, not only to the Chinese-Filipino community, but also to the mainstream Filipino society.

Our celebration pays tribute to the forerunners of the Federation. Through their determination, hard work and commitment, they surmounted all difficulties and led the Federation to success.

We take this occasion as an opportunity to thank our sponsors, donors, and partners in the Chinese-Filipino community, Philippine government, foreign governments, business community, and overseas organizations for working with us and supporting our projects these past five decades.

Our Federation has indeed come a long way from its humble beginnings to the largest ethnic- based business organization in the country.

While we may have already accomplished much, we remain committed to serving our country even more in the years to come.

FOLLOWING ARE THE MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF THE FEDERATION:

A. Economic Programs

FRIENDSHIP DAY CELEB

1. Trade and Investment Mission and forging partnerships with international chambers of commerce and business organizations. The Federation initiates and participates in trade, investments, and goodwill missions to various countries. These provide opportunities for the Federation to forge agreements and cooperation with foreign counterparts, especially across Asia, bringing in much needed investments to the Philippines.

2. Alliance with local business organizations. The Federation continues to strengthen its alliance with other business federations and organizations by working in partnership with them in pursuing worthy economic and socio-civic projects. The Federation has been active in advocacy work to improve the business environment and hasten economic development.

Bayan, Hixt ang Resibo

3. Tax Information and Advocacy. The federation encourages its members to comply with tax laws to help the government generate revenues for services needed by the people. The Federation regularly disseminates information on tax laws and regulations to its members through seminars and distribution of materials. Through dialogue with national and local officials, the Federation also seeks to resolve issues related to fiscal and tax policies.

4. Enhancement of Indusrial Relations. The Federation holds monthly breakfast meetings with the DOLE-NCR Director and other concerned labor authorities to discuss issues on employment and labor-management relations. Labor-management consultations are also held to disseminate and draw feedback on new labor policies and regulations.

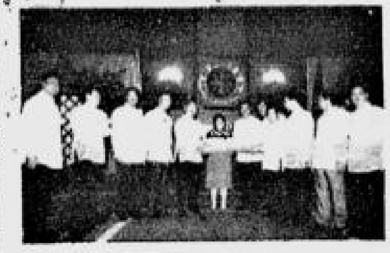
5. Support to Local Industries and Workers. To promote the development of local industries and save the jobs of local workers, the Federation spearheaded the **Buy Pinoy Movement.** In partnership with other business and industry federations, the Buy Pinoy campaign seeks to encourage consumers to patronize goods and services of companies that employ Filipinos. It also encourages companies to improve the quality of goods and services.

The Federation also conducts an average of three **Jobs Fairs** a year. Since 2001, about 10,000 applicants have been hired and interviewed by participating companies. The job fairs are conducted in partnership with the Department of Labor and Employment and participating companies.

6. Free Business Seminars. Free seminars, workshops and symposia provided by the Federation on laws and strategies concerning labor, taxation, customs, intellectual property, productivity improvement and others allow those engaged in business to improve company performance and compliance with laws and regulations.

B. Social Welfare Programs

Aside from projects that help improve the business environment, the Federation has been well recognized as a prime mover when it comes to projects that alleviate poverty and empower the needy to improve their lives. Since its inception in 1954, the Federation has relentlessly implemented programs and projects by tapping the resources of its members and like-minded individuals and organizations. In March 22, 1979, then Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos proclaimes March 23-29 as "Federation Week" to acknowledge and honor the Federation for its social contributions.



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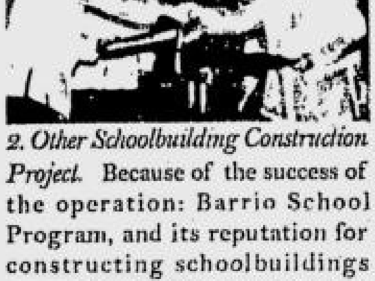
Under the Barrio Schools Project, the Federation raises funds to finance the construction of standard 7x14 meter two-room schoolbuildings. Donations from officers of the Federation and from the Chinese - Filipino community are pooled in a special fund to be utilized exclus[illegible]ly for the project.

Operation Barrio Schools is the longest-running and biggest private sector-led development program focused on educational infrastructure. In recent years, construction of the donated schools have accelerated as more and more members, organizations and private idividuals supported the Program. About 3,000 schoolbuildings have already been turned over to schools nationwide, benefiting more than half-a-million schoolchildren per school day.



2. Other Schoolbuilding Construction Project. Because of the success of the operation: Barrio School Program, and its reputation for constructing schoolbuildings promptly and at the lowest cost, the Federation was tapped to be the

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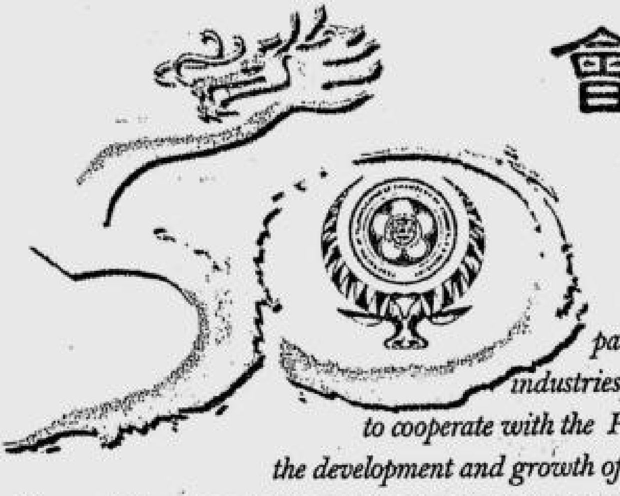
FEDERATION OF FILIPINO-CHINESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, INC.



菲華商聯總會

years of leadership, commitment & service.

The Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. was established on March 29, 1954 as a non-stock, non-profit organization. The Federation's paramount objectives are: to foster and encourage the development and growth of trade and industries in the Philippines; to cultivate, promote, and enhance friendly relations between members; to cooperate with the Philippine Government in the implementation of its national policies; to foster and support the development and growth of economic developments and other programs that will promote the progress of our nation.

Through the years, the Federation has been diligently extending its services to the members, at the same time, working for the welfare of all people, regardless of race or nationality. The services are not restricted on business and trade. It also deals with almost every aspect of mankind's living properly observed globalize freedom, and standards or mutual understanding and genuine friendship. Having a strict organizational structure, the Board of Directors takes charge in policy-making. It has now 39 directors with two years of term. Officers also participate in decision-making.

MESSAGES

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
PRESIDENT

I convey my warmest felicitations to the officers and members of the **Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII)** on the celebration of their *50th Anniversary.*

In the five decades since its establishment, FFCCCII has been a reliable partner of the government in the gigantic task of nation building. As an association of businessmen and entrepreneurs, it plays a significant role in pushing forward the engine of Philippine progress.

Of particular importance is its flagship project "Operation: Barrio Schools," a private sector school building program which has been at work since the 1960s. I am pleased to note that it has donated a total of 3,000 schools, with many of these located in far-flung areas that are in dire need of schools.

I thank FFCCCII for its invaluable services to the country. I am counting on your support of our government's initiatives especially my admiration's ten-point legacy designed to assure our people the benefits of socio economic progress in he next six years. Happy anniversary and *Mabuhay kayong lahat!*

NOLI "KABAYAN" L. DE CASTRO
VICE PRESIDENT

Greetings! Congratulations to the **Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc.** on its 50th Anniversary.

The past five decades have been full of achievements for FFCCCII. It has come a long way from simply a business organization to being one of the most active partners of government in nation building.

From business promotion to delivery of people's basic needs-the impact of FFCCCII's numerous program and projects are immeasurable. As the big brother of the Chinese-Filipino community, the FFCCCII has helped the community preserve its culture and tradition but at the same time promoted integration into mainstream society.

I congratulate FFCCCII for its achievements in the past, and I wish it success in all its future endeavors. *Mabuhay Kayong Lahat!*

FRANKLIN M. DRILON
SENATE PRESIDENT

I am honored to congratulate most warmly the officers and members of the **Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII)** on the **Golden Annivesary** celebration of this prestigious civic organization.

FFCCCII and its leader can sit back and take pride in their enviable record of achievement in the last half century of worthy service to the country and our people. Its humanitarian are too numerous to enumerate. Suffice to say, FFCCCII's prompt presence to give succor to victims of natural calamities and disasters are truly admirable. Its school building program is unparalleled in its magnitude and in its unrelentless pursuit. It has provided the leadership in rallying the Chinese community to move in step with the visions and aspirations of the Filipino people.

FFCCCII has truly earned the gratitude and goodwill of the Filipino people for reaching out to the needy and extending a hand to the poor.

Mabuhay!

JOSE DE VENECIA JR.
SPEAKER

On the 50th founding anniversary of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I convey my heartfelt gratitude to your officers and members for the FFCCCII's many accomplishments that have made people's lives better.

Because of your size-as perhaps the country's biggest ethnic Chinese-Filipino organization-your Federation has been a major economic influence and a unifying social force, through five decades.

Many have observed that the Federation has gone beyond matters of commerce and trade-although in this area its contributions are nothing but major and have merited public acclaim. Noteworthy of these are civic and humanitarian projects and endeavors for which it has earned the lasting goodwill and gratitude of our people.

Your Federation has been blessed with a strong membership and a compassionate leadership, helping redefine the meaning of service and social empowerment. This is the strength which you must continue to nurture.

Congratulations!

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
MAYOR

In behalf of the people of the City of Manila, I extend warmest congratulations to the Federation of **Filipino-Chinese of Commerce and and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII)** on its **Golden Anniversary** celebration.

Manileñeos will long remember the deep commitment and selfless concern that FFCCCII has shown. It inspired and initiated the founding of Chinese volunteer fire brigades in Manila that helped saved lives and property from destructive fires. Our brothers in depressed areas are the beneficiaries of its Operation: Mobile Clinic that provided free medical and dental assistance. Our police district improved its police mobility by FFCCCII's donation of brand new police cars. Manila too received its share of schools donated under FFCCCII's project "Operation: Barrio Schools."

The steadfast effort of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. to provide socio-civic services on top its contributions to the country's economic progress deserves the city's highest commendation and recognition.

My administration continues to pursue development in all area of the City, believing that only through development can we hurdle the greatest challenge that we face today: that all of liberating our country from the clutches of poverty. This is a challenge I pose to the FFCCCII: "That we jointly commit to work towards a tomorrow where each Filipino is gainfully employed and enjoying a full life that he deserves. Through much has been done in our accelerating urban renewal program, with FFCCCII on our side, much more can be achieved.

We in the city government hope for the success of the success of this and your future endeavors.

BUHAYIN NATIN ANG MAYNILA upang maging huwaran ang bansal MABUHAY!

Officer of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. 2003 - 2005

Dr. Lucio C. Tan
Emeritus President

John K.C. Ng
Honorable President

Domingo Le
Honorable President

Yao Eng Hue
Honorabe President

Jimmy T. Tang
Honorable President

Vicente Yu
Honorable President

Robin C. Sy
President

Francis Chua
Executive Vice President

Robert Siy Chin
Vice President

John K. Tan
Vice President

Vicente Sitosta
Vice President

Tan Tian Siong
Vice President

Henry Ah
Vice President

Alfonso G. Siy
Vice President

William Cobuchong
Board Member/Treasurer

Tan Ching
Board Member/Auditor

Atty. Jose Ngaw
Secretary General/ Corporate Secretary

Vicente Tan
Deputy Secretary General

Committees & Head Committee

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE	Henry Lim Bon Liong
PEACE & SUB COMMITTEE	John C. Kaw
TRADE & INDUSTRY COMMITTEE	Alfonso A. Uy
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE	Benjamin Co
TAX & BUSINESS ADVOCACY COMMITTEE	Peter Coliangco
WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE	She Ling Tan
WELFARE COMMITTEE	Enrique T. Chua
ARBITRATION COMMITTEE	Angel Tan
AGRICULTURA & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITEE	Ong Eng Chan
ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE	Tan Ching
EDUCATION & CULTURE COMMITTEE	William Chan
YOUTH & INTEGRATION COMMITTEE	Angel Ngu
MEDIA & PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE	Elpidio T. Duca
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	Ng Siu Seng
SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE	Alfredo M. Yao

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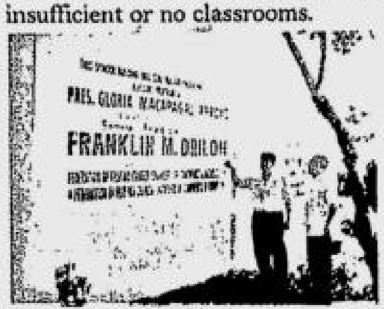
the government's partner in various government projects for school building construction.

In the late 1980's, then President of the Philippines, Corazon C. Aquino entrusted huge amounts of funds to the Federation for the construction of school buildings. And now, Philippine Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo also entrusted to the Federation P70 million from the President's Social Fund for the construction of schoolbuildings under the **PGMA Schoolbuilding Project.**

The Operation: Barrio Schools got another boost from the government, with the decision of Senator Franklin Drilon to assign P170 million/974 classrooms of hisCountrywide Development Fund to the Federation. This money is being used for the construction of more than 400 schoolbuildings in barangays with insufficient or no classrooms.

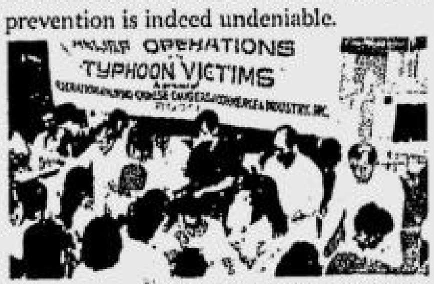


This partnership between Senator Drilon and the Federation is called the **FFCCCII-Drilon Schoolbuilding Project**. It transfers the responsibility of the constructing school buildings from the DPWH to the Federation under the Operation: Barrio Schools. According to Senator Drilon, this cuts in half the cost of school buildings, since a classroom built by the DPWH through private contractors can be built by the Federation for half the price. The Federation recently engaged in a program with the Departments of Education, Labor and Employment, and Foreign Affairs called the **Classrooms Galing sa Mamamayang Pilipino Abroad or CGMA**. The program seeks to solicit donations from Filipinos overseas for the construction of schoolbuildings in the spirit of bayanihan.

3. Other Projects to promote educational Development. To further promote the development of education, The Federation embarked on a scholarship program in partnership with Metrobank Foundation, Inc., the **"FFCCCII-Metrobank Foundation Share a Gift of Education Program"** It provides educational subsidy to 150 qualified elementary and high school students in accredited Chinese-Filipino schools nationwide. The federation is also a partner of the **Connect-Ed.ph Program**-private sector initiative that seeks to provide computers and Internet access to public schools nationwide in support of President Arroyo's PCs for Public Schools Program.

4. Operation: Mobile Clinic. Free medical and dental services and free medicines are provided to indigents not only in Metro Manila but in other provinces as well. Since 1980, these services have been rendered by the Federation and its Chapters with the help of pharmaceutical firms and volunteer services of physicians, dentists and nurses.

5. Disaster Mitigation. In 2003, when the world was afflicted by "SARS", especially in Asian countries, the Philippines was also threatened. The Federation gathered pertinent information from the Department of Health as well as from some health experts to fully support the government in printing various posters on the prevention and tips against SARS. Different member organizations, and in cooperation with different business sectors and associations availed of surgical mask for distribution to all parts of the nation. The federation further assigned volunteers to spray disinfectant on various streets. Because of the cooperation and response of various sectors, the Philippines was spared from the devastating effects of SARS. The Federation's contribution to SARS prevention is indeed undeniable.



6. Relief Operations. In times of natural calamities and disasters, the Federation and its chapters are among the first to extend relief assistance. In coordination with local government units, food, clothing, medicines and other immediate needs are delivered to victims at the soonest time.

7. Agricultural Demontration Farm. The federation developed an agricultural demonstration farm in Mabalacat, Pampanga to help the Philippines attain self-sufficiency in vegetables, complementing the hybrid rice program that seeks self-sufficiency in rice. The farm has a green house and open-air experiment areas planted with 56 varieties of vegetables from China, Israel, Korea and the Philippines. The demo farm also serves as a bridge builder for the cooperation between the Philippines and China on improved food production.

The federation also forges alliances with universities and even government institutions in China for the exchange of expertise in agriculture. Agricultural technology seminars are also held from time to time to disseminate information on new and better agricultural technologies.

8. Improvement of Peace and Order. Peace and order and public safety problems pose as major concerns for businessmen and investors, and their families. In this light, The Federation holds regular dialogues with government authorities concerned, including the Philippine President, to request for enforcement of strict measures to protect people's lives and property. While the Federation has made significant contributions in the government's peace and order programs, it also has initiated several projects on its own. As one of the project partners of the Department of the Interior and Local Government in the implementation of Parol 117, the Federation donated seven computers to upgrade the facilities of the "117" hotline hub in Sampaloc, Manila. We also provide

WELCOME GUESTS & VISITORS
MAGIC EYE
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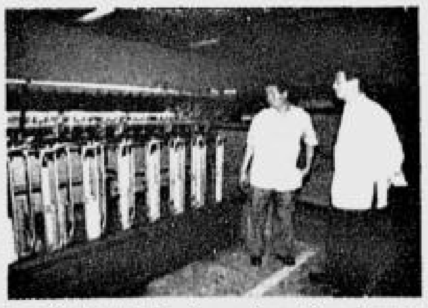
logistical support to our law enforcers to improve their crime fighting capabilities such as motorcycles, night-vision goggles, bullet-proof vests, raincoats, among others. The Federation also helped the Philippine National Police organize the Community Monitoring System, which helps deter crimes and acts of terrorism at the community level. The Federation was also instrumental in the setting up of the Councils of Community Elders which organizers respected leaders of community to work hand-in-hand with law enforcers in improving the peace and order situation in communities.

Nowadays, the country's safety and security shows significant improvement.

9. Business and Economic Research. Taking a proactive role in the policy making process, the Federation set up its research arm, the Federation Institute for Business and Economic Research (FIBER), that provides inputs that aid in articulating the position of the Federation in various national issues and policy discussions.

10. Meditation and Arbituation. As the big brother of the Chinese-Filipino community, the Federation fosters unity and understanding among the members of the Chinese-Filipino community by providing a venue to settle amicably business and personal conflicts. Through the Federation's meditation and arbitration, costly court proceedings and prolonged disputes are avoided.

11. Promoted the Development of Science and Technology. The Federation works in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to support research and development, and propagate the use of various locally developed technologies. The federation was a partner of the DOST in granting national awards to top inventors and science students to give incentives and encourage them to continue pursuing the field of science and technology. The Federation also held educational tours of Chinese-Filipino businessmen and students to reseach and technology centers to introduce locally developed technologies that the private sector may tap for possible application in various trade and industries.



12. Initiated the formation of volunteer fire brigades. In the early 1960's the Federation iniated the establishment of fire brigades and volunteer firefighters. Whenever a fire occurs, the brigade volunteers immediately help the government's fire brigade to fight the fire. This project also merit great support and appreciation. From then on, different areas in the country established their own volunteer fire brigades. Various circumtances of courgeous undertakings earned the applause and recognition of mainstream society.

13. Assistance to Foreign Nationals. The Federation works with the Bureau of Immigration to address the problem of illegal aliens from China. It provides the venue for the annual renewal of Alien Certificates of Registration (ACR's) of foreigner staying in the Philippines, especially the Chinese nationals. This helps the government document the stay of aliens and generate revenues. At the same time, it helps the foreigners who wish to become Filipino citizens by giving them guidance and advice on the processing of their applications for naturalization.

14. Business Promotion : Trade Fairs and Missions. The Federation hosts and participated in various trade fairs and sends investments missions to other countries. Through these missions, and through the various meetings we conduct with foreign embassies and foreign investors to visit the Philippines, we have generated investments and business partnerships in various industries. The Federation also sponsors business seminars and other fora that promote better management skills among enterpreneurs.

15. Cultural Development. The Federation spearheads the annual celebration of the Chinese-Filipino community of the Philippine Independence Day to recognize the significant roles the Chinese-Filipino played in the nation's history, and topromote nationalism. The Federation also host cultural programs as a means of preserve the rich culture and traditions of Chinese-Filipinos, and to educate other Filipinos aout the Chinese-Filipinos' unique blend of two cultures.

LOOKING FORWARD

The program cited are only some of the many programs and projects that the Federation has carried out this past 5 decades. As said"It is hard to star up, it is more difficult to maintain." Still, the Federation is not satisfied with its recent achievements, but will continuosly look forward and work harder for more substantial and better outcome, so as to thank the support and concern of the society.

As such, it aspires to have a share in the responsibility of shaping life and enhancing the sustainability and developing the resources for the good and benefit of all and in administering and ordering the relationship of society in the political and socio-economical sphere. This is in time for the celebration of the Federation 50th Anniversary, in reminiscence of the past and unfailing hope for the future, FFCCCII...Mabuhay!

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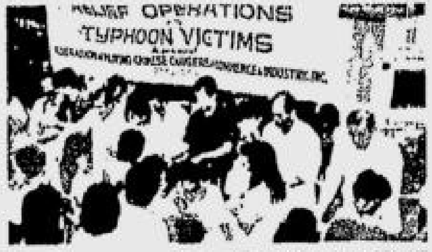
3. Other Projects to promote educational Development. To further promote the development of education, The Federation embarked on a scholarship program in partnership with Metrobank Foundation, Inc., the **"FFCCCII-Metrobank Foundation Share a Gift of Education Program"** It provides educational subsidy to 150 qualified elementary and high school students in accredited Chinese-Filipino schools nationwide. The federation is also a partner of the **Connect-Ed.ph Program**-private sector initiative that seeks to provide computers and Internet access to public schools nationwide in support of President Arroyo's PCs for Public Schools Program.

4. Operation: Mobile Clinic. Free medical and dental services and free medicines are provided to indigents not only in Metro Manila but in other provinces as well. Since 1980, these services have been rendered by the Federation and its Chapters with the help of pharmaceutical firms and volunteer services of physicians, dentists and nurses.

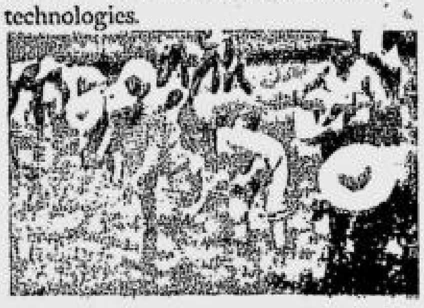
5. Disaster Mitigation. In 2003, when the world was afflicted by "SARS", especially in Asian countries, the Philippines was also threatened. The Federation gathered pertinent information from the Department of Health as well as from some health experts to fully support the government in printing various posters on the prevention and tips against SARS. Different member organizations, and in cooperation with different business sectors and associations availed of surgical mask for distribution to all parts of the nation. The federation further assigned volunteers to spray disinfectant on various streets. Because of the cooperation and response of various sectors, the Philippines was spared from the devastating effects of SARS. The Federation's contribution to SARS prevention is indeed undeniable.



6. Relief Operations. In times of natural calamities and disasters, the Federation and its chapters are among the first to extend relief assistance. In coordination with local government units, food, clothing, medicines and other immediate needs are delivered to victims at the soonest time.

7. Agricultural Demontration Farm. The federation developed an agricultural demonstration farm in Mabalacat, Pampanga to help the Philippines attain self-sufficiency in vegetables, complementing the hybrid rice program that seeks self-sufficiency in rice. The farm has a green house and open-air experiment areas planted with 56 varieties of vegetables from China, Israel, Korea and the Philippines. The demo farm also serves as a bridge builder for the cooperation between the Philippines and China on improved food production.

The federation also forges alliances with universities and even government institutions in China for the exchange of expertise in agriculture. Agricultural technology seminars are also held from time to time to disseminate information on new and better agricultural technologies.



8. Improvement of Peace and Order. Peace and order and public safety problems pose as major concerns for businessmen and investors, and their families. In this light, The Federation holds regular dialogues with government authorities concerned, including the Philippine President, to request for enforcement of strict measures to protect people's lives and property. While the Federation has made significant contributions in the government's peace and order programs, it also has initiated several projects on its own. As one of the project partners of the Department of the Interior and Local Government in the implementation of Parol 117, the Federation donated seven computers to upgrade the facilities of the "117" hotline hub in Sampaloc, Manila. We also provide logistical support to our law enforcers to improve their crime fighting capabilities such as motorcycles, night-vision goggles, bullet-proof vests, raincoats, among others. The Federation also helped the Philippine National Police organize the Community Monitoring System, which helps deter crimes and acts of terrorism at the community level. The Federation was also instrumental in the setting up of the Councils of Community Elders which organizers respected leaders of community to work hand-in-hand with law enforcers in improving the peace and order situation in communities.
Nowadays, the country's safety and security shows significant improvement.

WELCOME GUESTS & VISITORS
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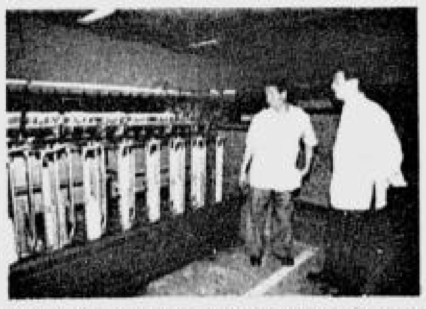
9. Business and Economic Research. Taking a proactive role in the policy making process, the Federation set up its research arm, the Federation Institute for Business and Economic Research (FIBER), that provides inputs that aid in articulating the position of the Federation in various national issues and policy discussions.

10. Meditation and Arbituation. As the big brother of the Chinese-Filipino community, the Federation fosters unity and understanding among the members of the Chinese-Filipino community by providing a venue to settle amicably business and personal conflicts. Through the Federation's meditation and arbitration, costly court proceedings and prolonged disputes are avoided.

11. Promoted the Development of Science and Technology. The Federation works in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to support research and development, and propagate the use of various locally developed technologies. The federation was a partner of the DOST in granting national awards to top inventors and science students to give incentives and encourage them to continue pursuing the field of science and technology. The Federation also held educational tours of Chinese-Filipino businessmen and students to reseach and technology centers to introduce locally developed technologies that the private sector may tap for possible application in various trade and industries.



12. Initiated the formation of volunteer fire brigades. In the early 1960's the Federation iniated the establishment of fire brigades and volunteer firefighters. Whenever a fire occurs, the brigade volunteers immediately help the government's fire brigade to fight the fire. This project also merit great support and appreciation. From then on, different areas in the country established their own volunteer fire brigades. Various circumtances of courgeous undertakings earned the applause and recognition of mainstream society.

13. Assistance to Foreign Nationals. The Federation works with the Bureau of Immigration to address the problem of illegal aliens from China. It provides the venue for the annual renewal of Alien Certificates of Registration (ACR's) of foreigner staying in the Philippines, especially the Chinese nationals. This helps the government document the stay of aliens and generate revenues. At the same time, it helps the foreigners who wish to become Filipino citizens by giving them guidance and advice on the processing of their applications for naturalization.

14. Business Promotion : Trade Fairs and Missions. The Federation hosts and participated in various trade fairs and sends investments missions to other countries. Through these missions, and through the various meetings we conduct with foreign embassies and foreign investors to visit the Philippines, we have generated investments and business partnerships in various industries. The Federation also sponsors business seminars and other fora that promote better management skills among enterpreneurs.

15. Cultural Development. The Federation spearheads the annual celebration of the Chinese-Filipino community of the Philippine Independence Day to recognize the significant roles the Chinese-Filipino played in the nation's history, and topromote nationalism. The Federation also host cultural programs as a means of preserve the rich culture and traditions of Chinese-Filipinos, and to educate other Filipinos aout the Chinese-Filipinos' unique blend of two cultures.

LOOKING FORWARD

The program cited are only some of the many programs and projects that the Federation has carried out this past 5 decades. As said "It is hard to star up, it is more difficult to maintain." Still, the Federation is not satisfied with its recent achievements, but will continuosly look forward and work harder for more substantial and better outcome, so as to thank the support and concern of the society.

As such, it aspires to have a share in the responsibility of shaping life and enhancing the sustainability and developing the resources for the good and benefit of all and in administering and ordering the relationship of society in the political and socio-economical sphere. This is in time for the celebration of the Federation 50th Anniversary, in reminiscence of the past and unfailing hope for the future, FFCCCII...Mabuhay!

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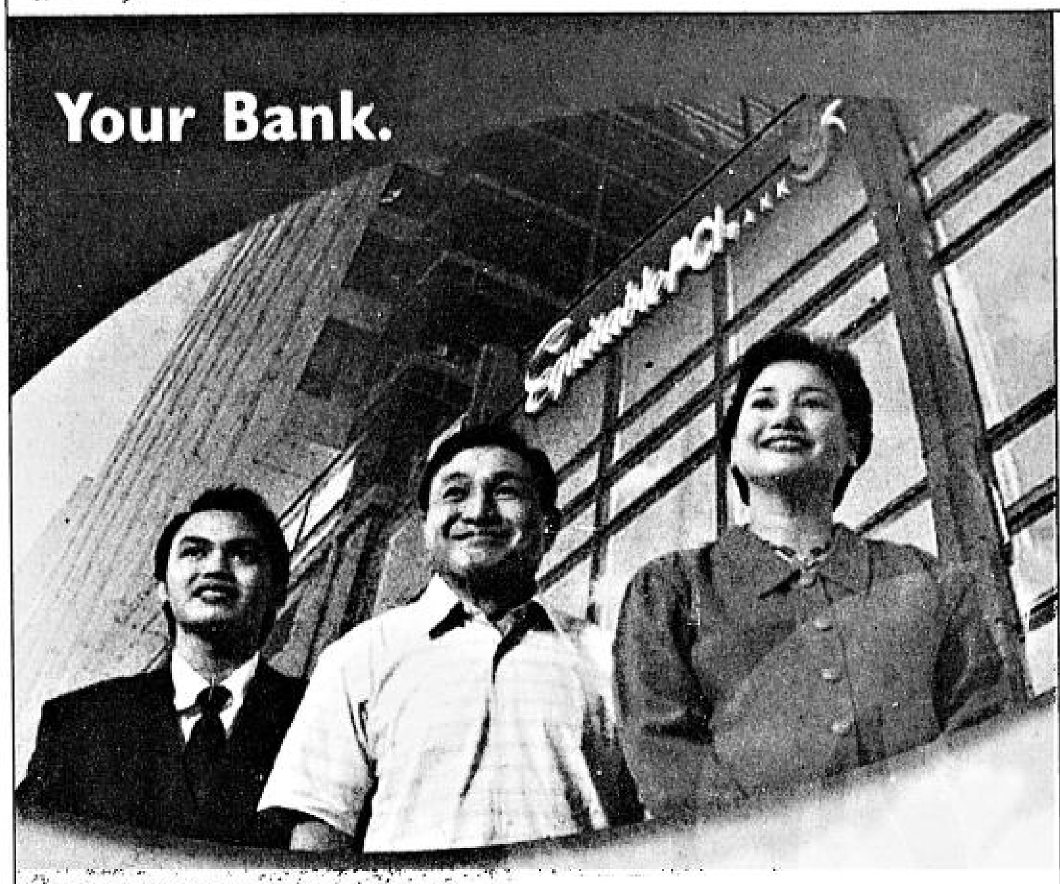

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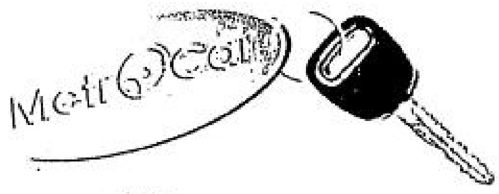

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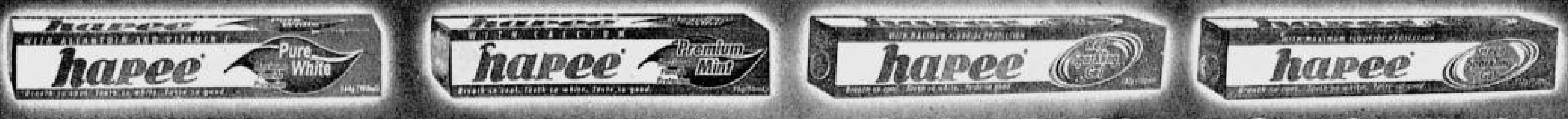
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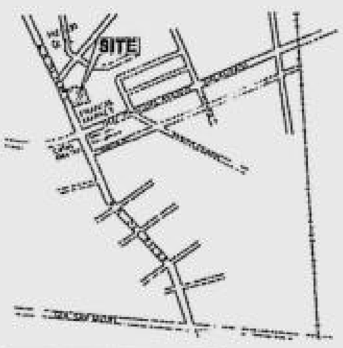

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of POINTWEST TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION with office address at 5th Floor Citibank Center, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as New ICT Service Firm in the field of Software Development with project site at the same office address stated above has been officially accepted on September 10, 2004.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this 10th day of September 2004.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Officer-in-Charge
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--Sept. 16, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. 2004-050

PD Ref. No.: PB040705-RM0092 /
PR No.: ITASD-04-007394

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TransCo), BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE (BAC) FOR HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).

   The abovementioned contractors should have the following valid and current License and Registration Particulars issued by PCAB.
   License : at least "Category D"
   Registration : at least "SMALL B"
2. Contract : **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF LABOR, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, TOOLS AND OTHER INCIDENTALS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS ROAD AT SAN ISIDRO RELAY STATION, LABRADOR, PANGASINAN.**
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that would be issued.

   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is ***P1,999,493.20*** to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Forms will be available for issuance starting **September 10, 2004 to September 27, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat, National Transmission Corporation, MMD, G/F Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, upon presentation of original PCAB License and a payment of non-refundable fee of **TWO HUNDRED Pesos (P200.00)** per copy.
5. Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent, duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Eligibility Forms, documents and statements shall be **8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. of September 28, 2004** and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. Opening of the Eligibility Envelope shall be on **September 29, 2004 at 10:00 a.m.** If the said date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Eligible bidders shall be notified on or before **October 6, 2004.**
6. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by eligible bidders from **October 7, 2004 to November 3, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **THREE HUNDRED Pesos (P300.00).**
7. Pre-Bid Conference for the submission of Technical and Price Proposals will be held on **October 21, 2004, 10:00 a.m.** at National Transmission Corporation, Admin Conference Room, G/F, Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
8. Submission of Technical and Price Proposals of eligible bidders shall be at **10:00 a.m. on November 4, 2004** at National Transmission Corporation, Admin Conference Room, G/F, Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted. The technical and price proposals will be opened immediately in the presence of Bidder's representative who chooses to attend.
9. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R A 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Act
10. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposals is most advantageous to the government
11. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Sept. 10 & 16, 2004)

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OBITUARIES

ERNESTO S. PINGOY

Joined his Creator on 10 September 2004 at the age of 78.

His bereaved wife, **NICASIA**; and children, **PATRICIO, CHERYL, ALEX, LOURDES, CORAZON, BERNADETTE** and **JOSE**; sister and brother, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at his residence, Mabini Extension, Carmen, Ozamiz City.

Interment will be on Friday, 17 September 2004 at the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Aguada, Ozamiz City, after 8:00 a.m. Mass at Immaculate Conception Cathedral.

JOSE LUIS C. DEL MORAL

(August 19, 1935 – September 12, 2004)

*His loving wife, **Encarnita Abiera-Del Moral**, children, **Pooh & Larry, Ana & Rolly**, grandchildren, **Theressa & Isabelle**, relatives and friends request for your most gracious prayers.*

His remains lie in state at the Santuario de San Jose, East Greenhills, San Juan.

Interment will be on Sunday, 19th of September 2004 after the 9 o' clock Mass in the morning.

"I am the truth and the life. No one comes near my Father except through Me..."

INOCENCIA "Ising" L. ROA

December 28, 1940 - September 14, 2004

She shall be missed by her dearest husband **Roberto "Tito" Roa**; children **Romy** and **Lot-lot, Lilet**; siblings **Irenea, Ernesto, Nene** and **Abe**.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, 143 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Saturday, September 18, 2004 at Funeraria Paz Crematory after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Chapel A.

CLASSIFIEDS

UPLB Stages Greek Tragedy Antigone

THE Theater Arts 107 and 108 classes and Communication Arts practicumers of the University of the Philippines Los Baños will be staging Antigone, a Greek tragedy by Sophocles.

Antigone tells the story of a young princess who defies a cruel decree issued by her uncle, King Creon, forbidding the burial of Polyneices, his brother and aggressor of Thebes. Her will and defiance, which she carried until her death, caused suffering to others. In this play, the tragedy of the Royal house of Thebes continues—after their father Oedipus has stained their lineage, his children are left to suffer retribution of his sins. *Antigone* arouses pity and fear, the cathartic effect of a Greek tragedy. It portrays the conflict between the laws of the gods and man, and between the loyalty to the family and the state.

Professor Noel Torreta, Chair of the Humanities Department, says "There is much to be learned from watching Antigone, particularly about what is to be human, what wisdom there is in suffering. If only for this, the presentation of this play would have been worth it."

Antigone is under the direction of Prof. Elmer Rufo. Show starts at 10 AM, 3 PM and 7 PM on September 15 and 16 at D.L. Umali Auditorium, UP Los Baños. For tickets, please contact Anya Roslin at 0919 585 13 65.UPLB Stages Greek Tragedy Antigone.

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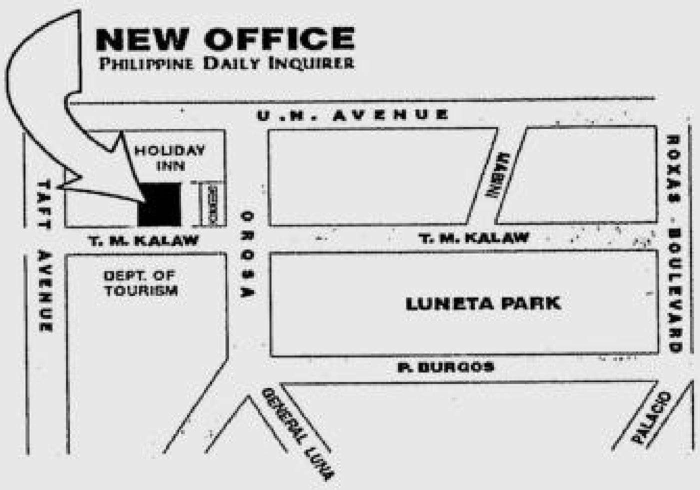

Thank you...

Overwhelming prayers, support, comfort, presence and love.
Loads of mass offerings, flowers, food and donation.
Our most heartfelt gratitude for all of these blessings, oh Lord.
Thank you for the loving and selfless people you sent to us.
May they be blessed a thousand fold.

Thank you, Lord God, for your faithfulness.

From the family of the late
ENGR. CRISTINO V. LAUREL
April 10, 1948 – September 05, 2004

DEATH NOTICES

ALBERTO K. CORVERA

Peacefully died in the grace of our Lord on Sept. 13, 2004 at the age of 67
His body lies in state at the Mount Carmel Parish Church,
Visayas Avenue, Project 6, Quezon City.
Interment will be on Saturday, September 18, 2004 at the South Cemetery.

JUANITO MENDOZA-PAGTALUNAN

August 21, 1934 – September 12, 2004
His remains lie in state at his residence at Tumana St.,
Mallorca, San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija.
Interment will be today, Sept. 16, 2004 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

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Randy Balaoro
Business Development Manager, Project Management Institute, Philippine Chapter
Topic: Becoming a Quality Project Manager

Bonifacio Belen
Executive Director, EDF-IT
Topic:
The Philippine IT General Certification Exam

Jesus Jose Deduque
Managing Director, Watson Wyatt Philippines
Topic: Information Technology HR Trends in the Philippines
Focus: The Filipino IT Professional Today

Peter F. De Kam
Workforce Solutions Executive, IBM Asia-Pacific,
Topic:
Ensuring Skills on the Job: The Role of a Standards-Based Approach to Workplace Skills

Emmanuel P. Dizon
First Vice President, ePLDT
Topic:
CISSP Certification (for Information Systems Security Professionals)

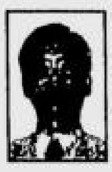
Klaus Ehret
General Director, TUV Vietnam
Topic:
The Six Sigma Principle

Cliff Linecker
General Manager, ICDL Asia-Pacific
Topic:
The International Computer Driver's License

Jun Miranda
President, Phil. Center for Creative Imaging
Topic: Certification for Graphics Designers, Is It Worth It?

Mark Joel Miranda
Division Manager for Product Support Services, Trend Micro Inc.
Topic: COPC Certification (for Contact Centers)

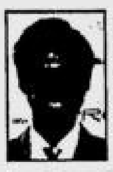
Michael Mudd
Director for Public Policy, CompTIA Asia Pacific
Topic:
CompTIA Certifications



Ong, Kuay Hock
Program Manager-Remedy BMC Software
Topic: Leveraging and Adapting ITIL Best Practices for IT Management

Catherine Ramos
Sr. Lead Auditor, AJA Registrars
Topic:
An Introduction to Information Security Management Systems (BS7799)

Narayanan Sreenivas
Managing Director, ECC International
Topic 1:
An Introduction to CMMI;
Topic 2:
eSCM, The First BPO Quality Standard



Mark Yambot
Director, Corporate Affairs, Microsoft Philippines
Topic:
Does it Pay to Get Certified?

OTHER KEY SPEAKERS

Gary Ignacio
Product Manager, Managed Networking Category, Corporate Business Group - PLDT
Topic:
Delivering Cutting-Edge Solutions

Matthew Barnier
Managing Director, Planwell Technology, Australia
Topic:
Implementing Process and Tools within the ITIL Framework Standard

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Tel. Nos. 522-00-00; 526-01-00 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/ sole proprietorship; or (b) 60% Filipino owned partnerships/corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2004-181	6 units MICR Encoder 4 units MICR Reader	P 810,000.00 1,200,000.00	LBP Funds
2004-223	2,000 spls. Ribbon for Epson FX 2180, Original 9,500 spls. Diskette 3.5HD, 10 pcs. per box 2,800 bxs. Envelope Mailing white with window (Legal size) 105mm x 241 mm (4-1/8" x 9-1/2"), 70gsm., 500 pcs./box	1,400,000.00 840,000.00 595,000.00	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on October 6, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 each per ITB.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on September 23, 2004 at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI-Sept. 9 & 16, 2004)

BUSINESS

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BUSINESS EXPANSION

Bank lending up 3.6%

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOANS extended by the country's commercial banks rose by 3.6 percent in July from a year ago, as the robust economic growth in the first semester resulted in moderate business expansion.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas statistics indicated that the outstanding loans of commercial banks reached P1.49 trillion in July.

The increase was fueled by higher borrowings by the following: agriculture, forestry and fishery sector; electricity, gas and water; manufacturing; wholesale and retail trade; transportation, storage and communication and, community, personal and social services.

On a monthly basis, the outstanding loans in July dipped by 0.7 percent from month-ago level.

The manufacturing sector accounted for 26 percent of the total loans extended by the banks. Loans to this sector, which in turn accounts for about 70 percent of the country's industrial output, were up by 3.8 percent.

Loans to the agriculture, forestry and fishery sector also went up by about 10.8 percent from a year ago, sustaining the double-digit annual growth posted in June.

This reflected the robust performance of the farm sector, which accounts for a fifth of the domestic economy. This sector posted a 6.61-percent production growth in the first semester due to bumper palay and corn harvests.

BSP data showed a decline in bank lending to other sectors such as construction and mining/quarrying.

The BSP believes that the moderate credit demand and investment growth implied that credit conditions would remain supportive of the economy's growth path.

The BSP expects credit activity to strengthen further in the months ahead as consumer spending continues to rise and investments start to pick up.

Despite the government's fragile fiscal position, robust private consumption fueled by election spending and higher use of cellular phones allowed the domestic economy to grow by 6.2 percent in the second quarter from a year ago.

This brought the first-semester gross domestic product growth to 6.3 percent, up from only 4.5 percent a year ago and higher than the target range of 4.9-5.8 percent for the full year.

RP wants to double flights to Japan

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES wants to double the number of the allowed RP flights to Japan and to expand their coverage so that three other carriers may undertake daily flights to that country.

According to a government source, Philippine officials have already asked their Japanese counterparts to increase the allocated flights of RP carriers during the ongoing air rights negotiations in Tokyo, Japan.

The bilateral talks started yesterday and will be concluded today.

The Philippines currently has an allocation of about 47 coefficients, equivalent to about 47 round trip flights for a 200-seater aircraft.

Aside from increased capacity, the Philippine air panel also wants Japan to open up two destinations: Nagoya and Haneda. So far, only Philippine Airlines has been flying to Japan.

Under the existing Philippine-Japan air service agreement, frequency entitlements are measured by coefficients. One coefficient is equivalent to one round trip flight using a Boeing 575 aircraft, which has seating capacity of 228; 1.5 coefficients for an Airbus 330, which can carry 250 to 293 passengers; and 2 coefficients for Boeing 747, which has seating capacity of 347 to 490.

"We want to double the capacity to accommodate Cebu Pacific and two cargo carriers," said the government source privy to the negotiations. "The air panel is targeting 28 additional flights that would allow the three carriers to fly daily to Japan."

The two cargo firms are Pacific East Asia Corp. controlled by Lucio Tan, and Asian Overnight Express Cargo.

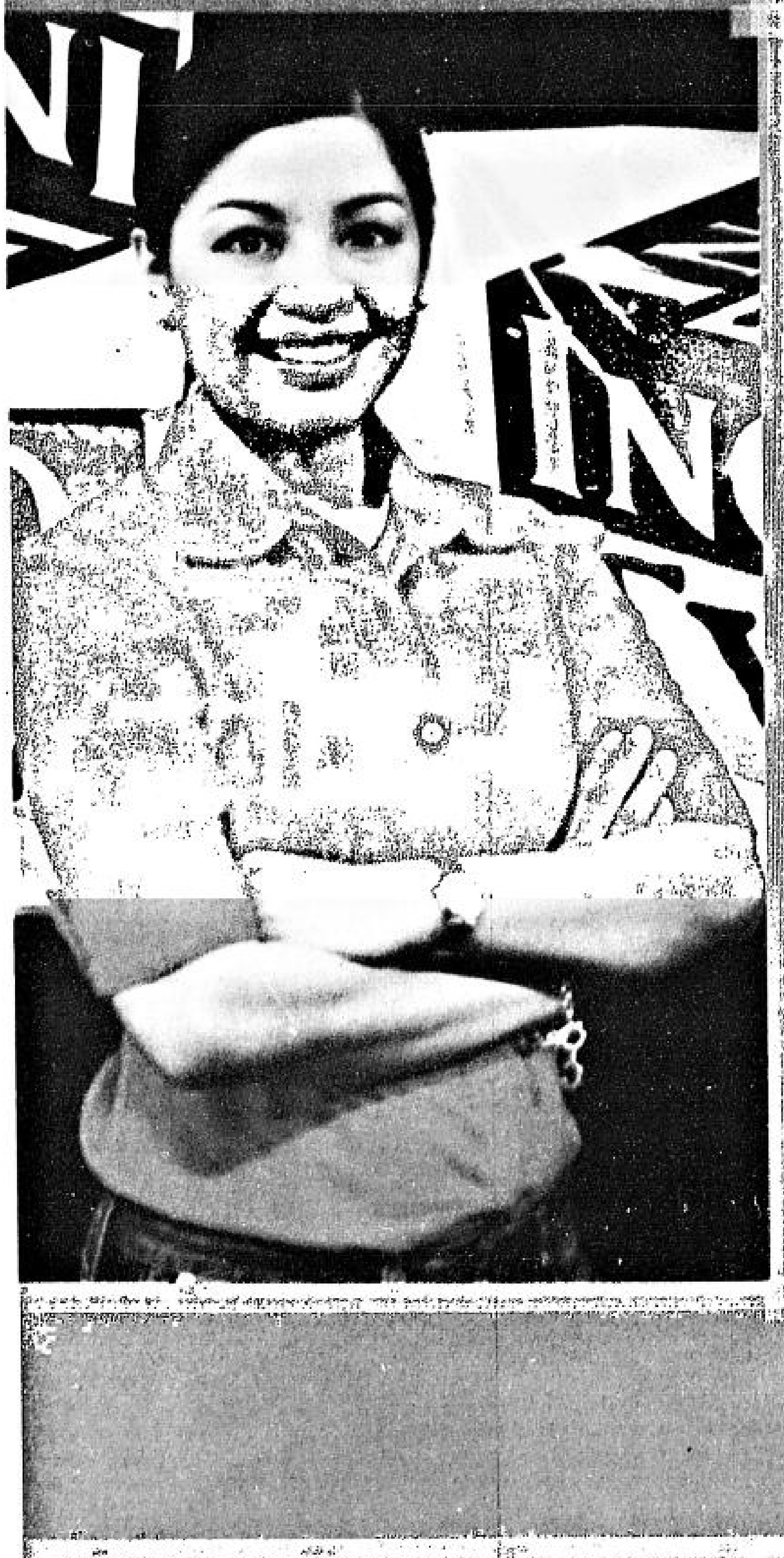
"Besides the passenger entitlement, we are asking for a separate entitlement for cargo," the source said.

Japan is an important destination to local airlines because it is the second largest source of foreign arrivals next to the United States.

PAL acquired all the available frequencies the Japanese government had given, leaving no seats for the second biggest player Cebu Pacific.

Cebu Pacific had been asking the Civil Aeronautics Board to be allowed to fly to Japan.

Ngayong 8pm + Pagkatapos ng The Probe + ABC



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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

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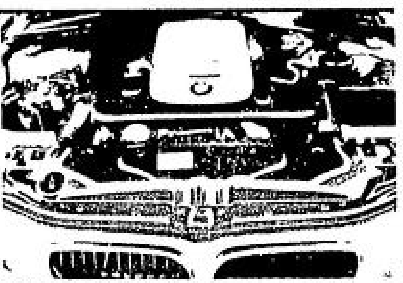
HIGH-PERFORMANCE diesel cars are slowly catching up with gas-fed counterparts.

PGA Cars BMW



THE 3.0L straight six engine looks like any well-designed BMW engine with few minor differences, the most obvious being its intercooler since current BMW gasoline engines are not turbocharged.

Taking a second look at diesel engines

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

(First of two parts)

INITIALLY, let's have some diesel history: Sometime in 1892, German engineer Rudolf Diesel patented a more efficient internal combustion engine design, in which the fuel was ignited by the high temperature of a compressed gas, rather than a separate source of energy (such as a spark plug) that was previously developed.

But the engines Diesel developed were bulky for anything but stationary use (due to the size of the fuel injection pump).

As a result, diesel engines were produced primarily for industrial use and shipping in the early 1900s.

It was not until the 1920s when diesel engines became small enough and light enough for land vehicles.

Diesel engines were fitted, initially, to tractors, trucks, buses and later on to passenger cars when Mercedes-Benz debuted its first diesel-powered sedan, the 260D, in 1936.

Few market

Sadly, the car market wasn't that enthusiastic about the diesel engine.

Despite the advantages, diesel-powered cars did not retain their appeal with their consumers since they accelerate less quickly than their gasoline counterparts and are noisier, due to the higher pressure of the compression-combustion process (environmental impact wasn't an issue at the time).

During the 1973 oil embargo, the diesel engine enjoyed a brief period in the limelight, thanks to its amazing ability to boost mileage.

However, this surge of diesel engine sales worldwide ended sometime in the '80s as the price of oil stabilized and the immediate need for conservation subsided in the people's consciousness.

Despite these developments, diesel cars continue to be popular in Europe and other places where fuels are more expensive.

Coming back

And now that gasoline prices have gone up recently, diesel engine seems to be coming back in fashion.

"The diesel phenomenon is not unique to the Philippines. Elsewhere around the globe, motorists have wised up to the benefits of diesel engines," said Timmy Naval, PR manager of Isuzu Philippine Corp., a leading manufacturer and distributor of diesel-powered vehicles in the country.

In fact, in western Europe 25 to 40 percent of vehicles are diesel-powered and it is expected to increase to 50 percent or more by 2010.

Naval reported that in the United Kingdom alone, it is estimated that there has recently been a 25 percent increase among users of diesel-powered vehicles.

Said Naval: "There were just more than 4 million British motorists driving diesel-powered cars in 2002. By the end of 2003, the figure had risen to 4.6 million."

Wider range

The reason for the resurgence in popularity is the wider range of diesel vehicle models available throughout the European market today than ever before.

"In Europe, diesel engines are employed by passenger cars, trucks, ships and construction equipment to lawn mowers, motorboats and electric power generators for factories or buildings," Naval said. "No other internal combustion engine boasts of such a wide range of potential applications, allowing diesel engines to play a very important role in the region's daily energy needs," she added.

Also, there is significant progress made in the technology, efficiency, performance and drivability of diesel engines in recent years.

"As a result, there is now the availability of diesel-powered engines in more and more vehicle segments in that region—from 'micro' to luxury," said corporate communications manager Lito German of BMW Philippines, which markets two diesel-powered models—the X5 3.0d sport utility vehicle and 530d sedan—in the Philippines.

German said today's manufacturers of diesel engines, especially in Europe, have improved them to a point where they are almost equal in performance to that of its gasoline-fed counterparts.

"The diesels are catching up. Take for example, our gasoline-fed 530i that can accelerate from zero to 100 km/h in 6.9 seconds. The diesel-fed 530d can achieve the same in 7.1 seconds—a mere 0.2 seconds difference," said German.

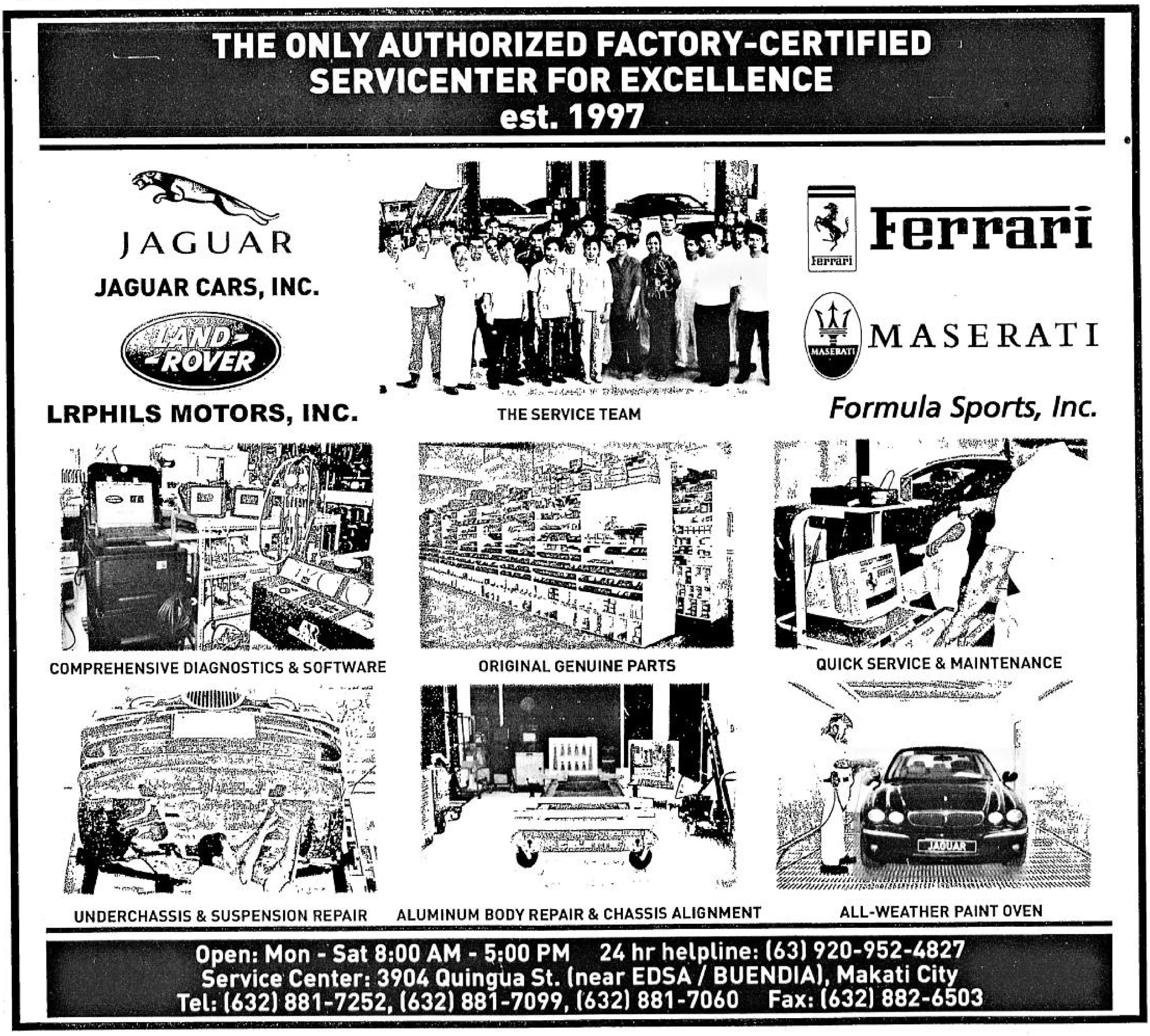
Better mileage

But more than the performance, motorists value nowadays the diesel engine's fuel consumption per mileage, which is around 30 to 40 percent less than gasoline.

Since diesel is cheaper, its total fuel cost per mileage is around 40 to 60 percent lower than gasoline.

Said Naval: "Assuming you drive a gasoline-fed SUV every day (with a mileage of 5 km/L) and the distance you

TAKING/ C2



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Spot the 'SUV-liminal' changes

REARMOST seat now facing forward for the Patrol

By Tessa R. Salazar

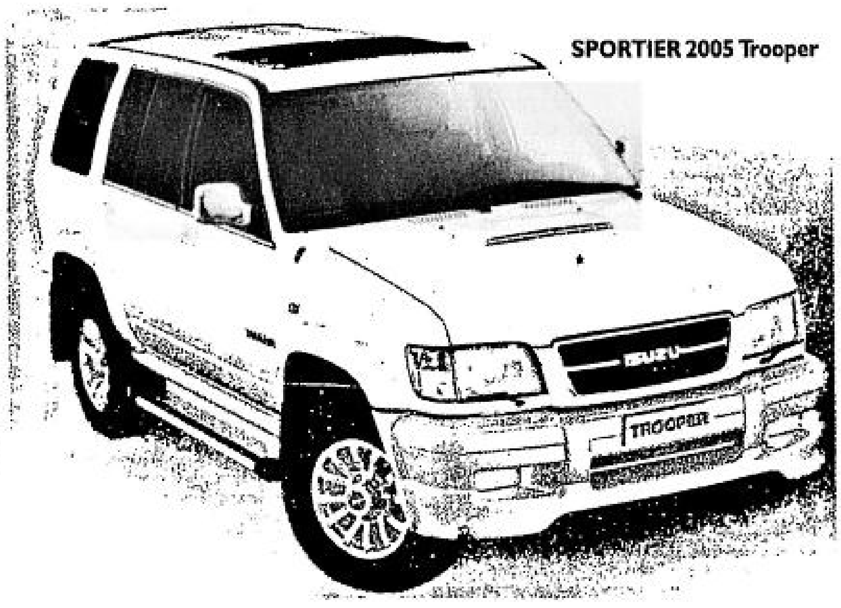
THE 2005 TROOPER gets sporty. The present Patrol's rearmost seat is now facing forward.

These, in a nutshell, are the "big" changes that the two major SUVs in the country underwent this last quarter of 2004 to greet the year 2005.

'Big' changes

These symbols of wealth and power will bear a sporty radiator grille and wear a gold badge (Trooper).

Subtle as these changes may be, Isuzu and Nissan swear these small touches enhance the already sophisticated image of their top-selling SUVs



SPORTIER 2005 Trooper

Subtle as these changes may be, Isuzu and Nissan swear these small touches enhance the already sophisticated image of their top-selling SUVs.

The new 2005 Isuzu Trooper is now equipped with a sporty horizontal design with chrome-accented radiator grille and Gold Isuzu badge—for a more aggressive and masculine stance. This is complemented by a front bumper chin spoiler for that wide and intimidating look. Fog lamps are added to give better driving visibility and safety. Wheels are more attractive with its 16-inch 12-spoke chrome alloys. The spare tire cover design now offers a more solid-looking rear with the new, more visible and prominent line designs.

The 2005 Isuzu Trooper is furnished with a new entertainment package—a JVC DVD head unit for enhanced entertainment on the road. This handsome audio unit also features a variable colorgraphic display with MP3.

Meanwhile, the Nissan Patrol gets a new set of third-row seats free for buyers. These seats immediately convert forward occupancy of Universal Motors Corp.'s premium flagship product into a seven-seater SUV.

Additional seats

The third row seats can be used as additional seats for out-of-town jaunts or as a safe place for one's laptop and briefcase. These seats can also become additional human seats, although tall passengers may find them quite uncomfortable (they have to fold the original second row seats if they hope to get more room), it is admittedly a convenient way to pack in more passengers for short trips (politicians, take a hint).

Those who prefer hauling cargo instead of passengers will enjoy the fact that the third row seats are collapsible to take in even large paraphernalia. These collapsible seats replace the laterally positioned third row seats and convey a true JDM (Japanese domestic market) feel within the Patrol's expansive interior. JDM SUV fanatics are known for their attention to detail, especially with the ergonomics and the interior of certain vehicles. This offer is in addition to Universal Motors Corp.'s newest financing scheme for the Patrol, Frontier and Urvan Escapade and Shuttle, which gives the buyer two options.

Financing schemes

For the Patrol, one can opt for a low down payment of P368,000-P405,000, or one may choose the second option of low monthly plans, all based on a 50 percent down payment, with 60 months to pay for the remaining balance. Low monthly schemes go from P25,008 to P27,231.

Meanwhile, the 2005 Isuzu Trooper 4x2—powered by the 3.0-liter 16-valve DOHC turbocharged 4JX1-TC diesel engine mated to a 4-speed automatic transmission—is priced at P1,995,000 and available in alpine white, satin silver, foxfire red, dragon green and ebony black—all in two-tone finish.

Sport truck, custom car show starts Sept. 29

METRO Manila's coolest last quarter motoring event, the 2004 Caltex Delo Sport Truck & Custom Car Show is all set to unfold on Sept. 29 at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall B, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City.

Until Oct. 3, this year's show promises to be even bigger with the inclusion of hot motorbikes and bicycles into the event for the first time. The Bike Show will have its own series of show competitions, seminars, murals and other unique highlights.

Mecca for enthusiasts

Organized by TradeShow International Inc., the motor racing-inspired event has become the mecca for sport truck and custom car enthusiasts bringing together under one roof, the most wildly modified sport trucks, SUVs, pickups and cars in the country. This is the show were monster trucks and gull-winged Hondas are the norm and not the exception.

It is also the show where a host of corporate exhibitors will launch their latest "go-fast" products into the general motoring public such as the latest engine racing parts, circuit racing and off-road suspension parts, aero body kits, monster wheels and tires, NOS systems, free-flow exhaust systems, racing seats, racing apparel, wild paint jobs, murals, mega sound and video systems, car care products and other allied services.

Competitions

The sport truck competition will give awards for the Best of Show, Best in Class and several special awards. It will also hold a bikini show and seminars on sport truck off-road racing and sport truck seminar.

The custom car competition will give awards for the Best of Show, Best in Class, Best Body Kit and other special awards. There will also be seminars scheduled on motor sports racing, slalom racing, karting, rally, autocross and drag racing.

The motorcycle and bicycle competition will have awards for the Best of Show (motorcycle), Best of Show (bicycle), Best in Class, People's Choice award and other special awards. There will be a photo gallery chronicling the history of motorbikes and a bike art section featuring murals, T-shirt painting, face painting, henna tattooing and many more. Seminars on motorbike competition racing and a special display of vintage motorbikes are also in store for show visitors.

Another much-awaited event highlight is the search for Ms Sport Truck Show, Ms Custom Car Show and for the first time, Ms Bike Show. The search is open to all promotional girls employed by the different corporate exhibitors for the event. Apart from being good looking, the criteria for judging also include the level of knowledge of the contestant about the product she is promoting and the manner with which she carries herself while endorsing the product to the show visitors.

Sponsors

The show is presented by Caltex Delo with Oriental & Motolite Corp. and Ambi Pur as gold sponsors and Top Gear magazine as major sponsor.

Minor sponsors are EXO Armoring, Sunrise Holidays Concepts, 105.1 Crossover, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, Wave 89.9, 103.5 K-lite, Jam 88.3, Infodyne, www.yehey.com, Motorcycle Philippines, Manila Bulletin, Business World, Today, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Buy & Sell, Vantage Consulting & Solutions Inc., Sky Star, Samsung, Taytan Int'l Corp. and Citibank.

NISSAN X-TRAIL

X-Trail No.1 SUV in August

FOR THE NTH time, the Nissan X-Trail topped the monthly SUV sales charts, this time in August, proving once again that it is one of the best-selling SUVs in the country whose appeal will never wane.

Officials at Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. attributed the X-Trail's sales-topping performance last month to its being very appropriate for Philippine motoring conditions roads, which are characterized by the roads with pot holes, imperfect gradient and floods.

On top of that, NMPI officials believe the X-Trail is technically superior to its competitors in the country, and has a styling that appeals to those who love the outdoors.

Topping sales chart

Said NMPI sales planning manager Chock Camacho: "Filipino vehicle buyers have become more intelligent and this partly explains why the X-Trail has topped the monthly sales charts more than once. For one, it is really tailored to take on Philippine road conditions."

For the month of August, a total of 198 X-Trails were sold, topping the Honda CR-V (190 units); Toyota RAV4 (167 units) and the Ford Escape (106 units).

Notably, the past two months have experienced heavy rains and typhoons, which made many Filipino motorists realize that the best vehicle for the rainy season is a real SUV that can take on flooded streets, and still give its passengers sedan-like comfort. In those aspects, the X-Trail delivers more than that.

On top of that, the X-Trail assembled in the Philippines by NMPI was recently cited for its excellent assembly quality with a Vehicle Evaluation Survey (VES) ranking that is the highest in the region—even better than in Japan.

4WD system

What sets the X-Trail apart from the rest of the competition is its four-wheel drive system is known as "All-Mode Four Wheel Drive" and offers a choice of two-wheel drive, full-time four-wheel drive or Auto Mode. The system was developed from the four-wheel-drive system of the legendary Skyline GT, and is considered among the most advanced in the world.

In Auto Mode, the advanced engine and transmission management computer does the selection between front-wheel drive and four-wheel drive depending on terrain, speed and torque requirements. This is done based on inputs from five sensors in the vehicle, including one that reads vehicle angle.

In 4x4 mode, the "no-slip on start-ups" gives all four wheels with power each time the accelerator pedal is depressed. Instead of detecting wheel slip, the X-Trail disengages the 4x4 system only when 4x4 is not needed. This allows the X-Trail to take on treacherous off-road conditions without losing traction as all four wheels operate each time the accelerator is depressed.

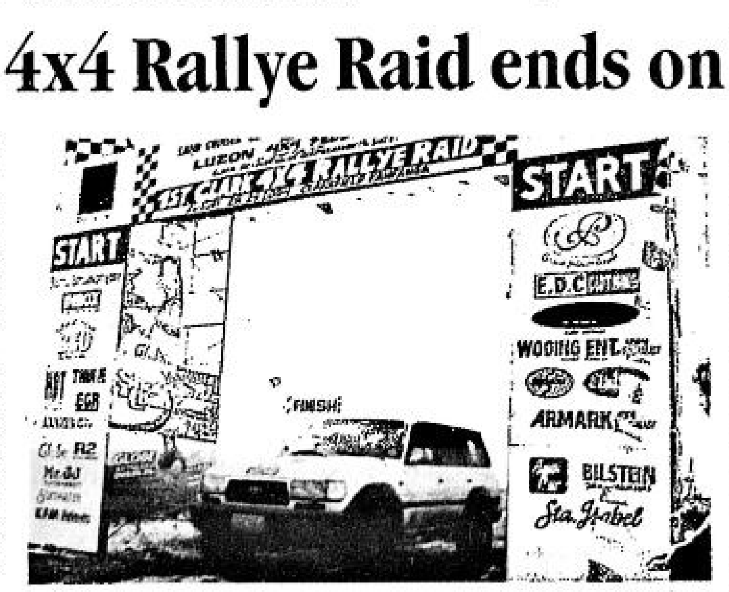
The X-Trail's interior was also inspired by airline designing, giving it the best legroom in its class. The 2.5- and 2.0-liter engines of the X-Trail deliver 180PS and 150PS, respectively, and are known for their ample torque, responsiveness and smoothness.

First Clark 4x4 Rallye Raid ends on high note

THE TEAMS of Dante and Homer Dungca, Noel Bartolome Jr. and Noel Bartolome Sr., Devor Andres and Trevor Andres topped their respective categories in what could well be the toughest test for men and machines ever to be held in the country—the First Clark 4x4 Rallye Raid.

Hosted by the Land Cruiser Club Pampanga Chapter and sanctioned by the Luzon 4x4 Federation, the event took place on Aug. 28 and 29 in Pampanga. It was sponsored by Petron Rev-X, Bilstein, Thule, R2 AutoCentrum, Silverwind, Ambi Pur, Armark, 105.1 Crossover and Clark Development Corp.

The Dungca brothers took first place in the 4-cylinder class ahead of the duos of Noel Dizon/Rex Roco, Edgardo Quizon/Kenneth Wilkerson, Benson Ong/Jake Estrada and Glen Amores/Yoki Reyes. Dante Dungca drove their custom-built Jeep, while the speech- and hearing-impaired Homer did the navigation chores.



JAN Michael Co and Michelle Ching prepare to take off in their production-class Toyota Land Cruiser VX during the First Clark 4x4 Rallye Raid.

The 6-cylinder class, meanwhile, was topped by the father-and-son team—Noel Bartolome Sr. and Jr.—in their Toyota Land Cruiser. They were followed home by Jessie Tancungco/Alex Surla, Jose Diaz/Glen Capistrano, Norman Bengco/Tino Dimalanta, and Elizalde Fernando/Edwin Santos.

In the newly organized production class, Devor Andres and Trevor Andres took top honors in their Toyota Land Cruiser VX SUV. Slotting in behind them were Clemente Lopez/Michael Lopez in a Nissan Patrol SUV, Alvin Castro/Darell Garbes in a Toyota Hi-Lux pickup, Mon Dizon/Christian Dizon in a Toyota Land Cruiser and Olson Camacho/Jojo Macaraeg in a Mitsubishi Pajero.

First place in the Team Awards went to the Caltex Team with a total time of 49:14. Second place went to Land Cruiser Club of the Philippines Pampanga Chapter (55:39), while the Land Cruiser Club of the Philippines Manila Chapter landed third (1:01:53).

The event, which followed a rallye raid format similar to the world-famous Dakar and Australian Safari rallies, attracted a field of 29 crews who negotiated a total distance of 60 kilometers of difficult and challenging terrain. It was the first time that such a format was used in a 4x4 event and although many of them were exhausted, the participants thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere and competition.

Taking a second look at diesel engines

From page C1

travel each day is some 40 kilometers. This means your SUV consumes no less than 8 liters of fuel each day, which amounts to P214 (going by the current premium gasoline price of P26.75 per liter). This represents a weekly expense of P1,070 or a monthly cost of about P4,300 if you work five times a week."

She said applying the same scenario to a diesel-fed SUV (with a 10 km/L mileage and a daily consumption of 4 liters of diesel fuel) would only amount to P83 (at P20.75 per liter).

"This would just translate to a weekly expense of P415 or about P1,700, monthly—a monthly savings of P2,600 or a whopping P31,200 difference for the whole year," she revealed.

Naval said the main bulk of Filipino car buyers who are turning to diesel-powered rides for their everyday commute are those who love to compute and monitor their expenses.

Viewing Pinoy AUVs through owners' lens

From page C4

Philippines. Ruste hails from Bacolod City.

Hanson Y. Ong's "Step By Step," a portrayal of the owner's Revo taking part in the family's achievements bagged the second prize of P75,000. Ong is from New Manila, Quezon City.

Reynaldo C. Mondez's "Balikbayan"—a reflection of the Revo as an OFW's prized possession—bagged the third prize of P50,000. Mondez is from Taguig, Metro Manila.

Professional photographer John Chua, award-winning short-filmmaker Kidlat De Guia, "Travel Time" TV lifestyle show host Susan Calo Medina, Dentsu Philippines art director Rino Maniquis and Toyota Motor Philippines vice president for marketing Raymond Rodriguez composed the board of judges.

The other winners were Lemuel C. Arrogante's "Fly High," Samuel P. De Leon's "After A Day's Work," Normito Alvarez's "Rev Up Your Life," Hanson Ong's "Fishing Buddies" and Jesse M. Narrazo's "Wedded Bliss."

HUMBLE beginnings

BEARER of good news from the "Balikbayan" entry

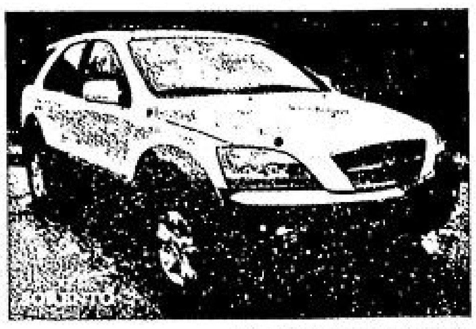
KIA SORENTO: *SUV FOR ALL SEASONS*

Columbian Autocar Corporation (CAC), the sole manufacturer and distributor of KIA cars in the country, is out to reassert its market presence by unveiling new models that are definitely better than before.

According to newly appointed Columbian Autocar Corporation executive vice president and chief operating officer Felix J. Mabilog, Jr., "the new KIA vehicles can deliver the same functional convenience, safety and dependability but are more reasonably priced compared to other brands. Our aim is to offer Filipino buyers a good and wiser alternative, especially to those who may not be willing to spend much but are in need of a reliable and dependable means of transport. In KIA, vehicle customers get an excellent value for their money, metal for metal. But most of all, they get all these transport qualities and conveniences without feeling a dent in their pockets."

On top of the list of new KIA vehicles is the powerful and macho-looking **Sorento SUV**, a sports utility vehicle that combines the ruggedness of the off-road, go-anywhere workhorse with the comfort and smooth-ride of a top of the line sedan.

Mabilog describes the Sorento as, pound for pound, "the best looking SUV in the market today." It approaches its performance tasks with power that overwhelms the roughest terrain but glides over paved roads in serene smoothness. It reflects the relentless drive of KIA to achieve its goal of global prominence through advanced engineering and design."



The Sorento boasts of a huge 3.5 liter quad cam, multi-valve gasoline V6 with electronic fuel engine injection and engine management system that pumps out 197ps@ 5,500 rpm and a hefty 30.1 kg.m. torque at 3,300 rpm. The standard four-wheel drive comes with a 4-speed automatic that shifts seamlessly to match one's driving needs. Its crisp handling and superb maneuverability is derived from its double wishbone suspension up front, and a 5-link set-up at rear that soaks up all irregularities. The Sorento's powerfully built 245 R70/16 steel-belted radials on alloy wheels ensure constant grip under all road conditions.

The Sorento has fully reclining seatbacks and adjustable headrests. The rear seats have a 60:40 split and can be folded flat to accommodate cargo when necessary. There are splendidly designed amenities in its spacious cabin like illuminated vanity and power side mirrors; low washer fluid indicator; overhead console; speed sensing power steering; power outlets; cup holders; dual lever console; mesh storage pockets on both front seatbacks; CD/Cassette audio system; and, digital multi-meter (altimeter, thermometer, barometer and directional compass).

KIA is acknowledged as one of the most improved brands in reliability studies conducted very recently. It offers world-class quality and value and its cars are winning more and more awards for quality and safety.

KIA is an international company that has 30,000 employees and spans the globe with 15 manufacturing and assembly plants in 12 countries. It produces more than one million vehicles annually, which are sold through an international network of some 3,000 distributors covering 190 countries.

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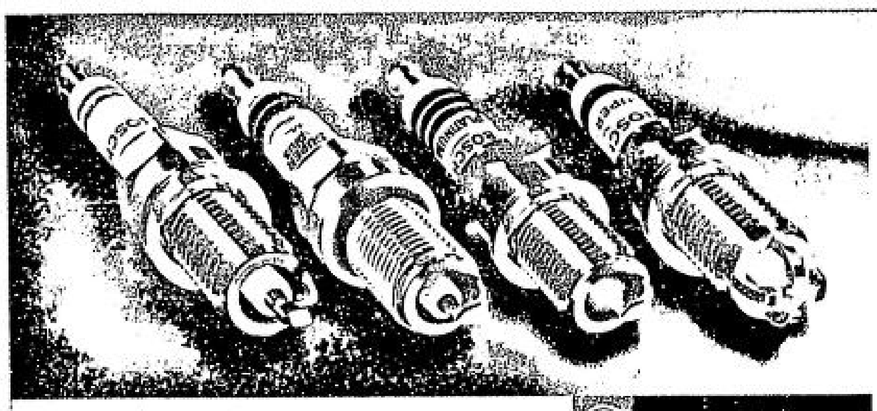

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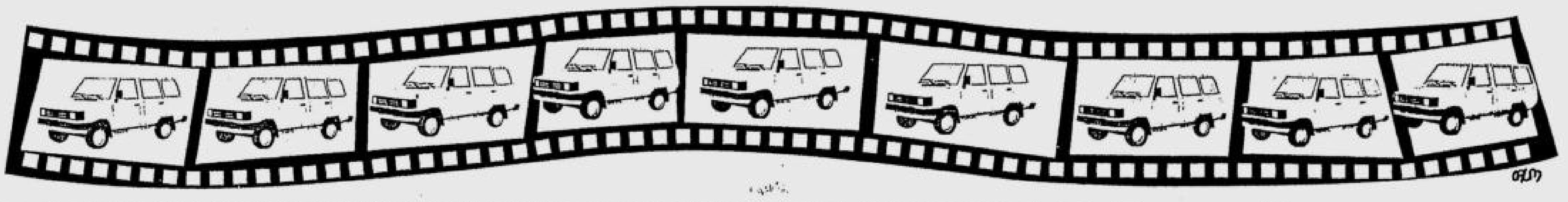

Viewing Pinoy AUVs through owners' lens

By Tessa R. Salazar

PICTURES are worth more than a thousand words for AUV enthusiasts who take joy not only in driving but in photography as well. This more-than-utilitarian relationship between AUVs and their owners were recently depicted in still pictures at the Cortes de las Palmas in Alabang Town Center Sept. 10.

The photos capture the rise, specifically, of the pioneering AUV Toyota Tamaraw FX Revo from its humble beginnings as a simple people- and load-carrier to its sophisticated SUV ride and appearance today.

Hundreds of pictures quietly depicted the dramatic growth of the AUV among Filipino motorists, which started from the need for less expensive utility vehicles.

The exhibit, which was also a photo competition among Toyota Revo owners, started July 2.

An image of a group of FX taxi drivers playing *dama* (Chinese checkers) while waiting for passengers bagged the P100,000 grand prize. Joaquin S. Ruste's "Dama: Street Scene" was described by judges as "perfectly capturing the Tamaraw FX's proud heritage and contribution to the

VIEWING/C3

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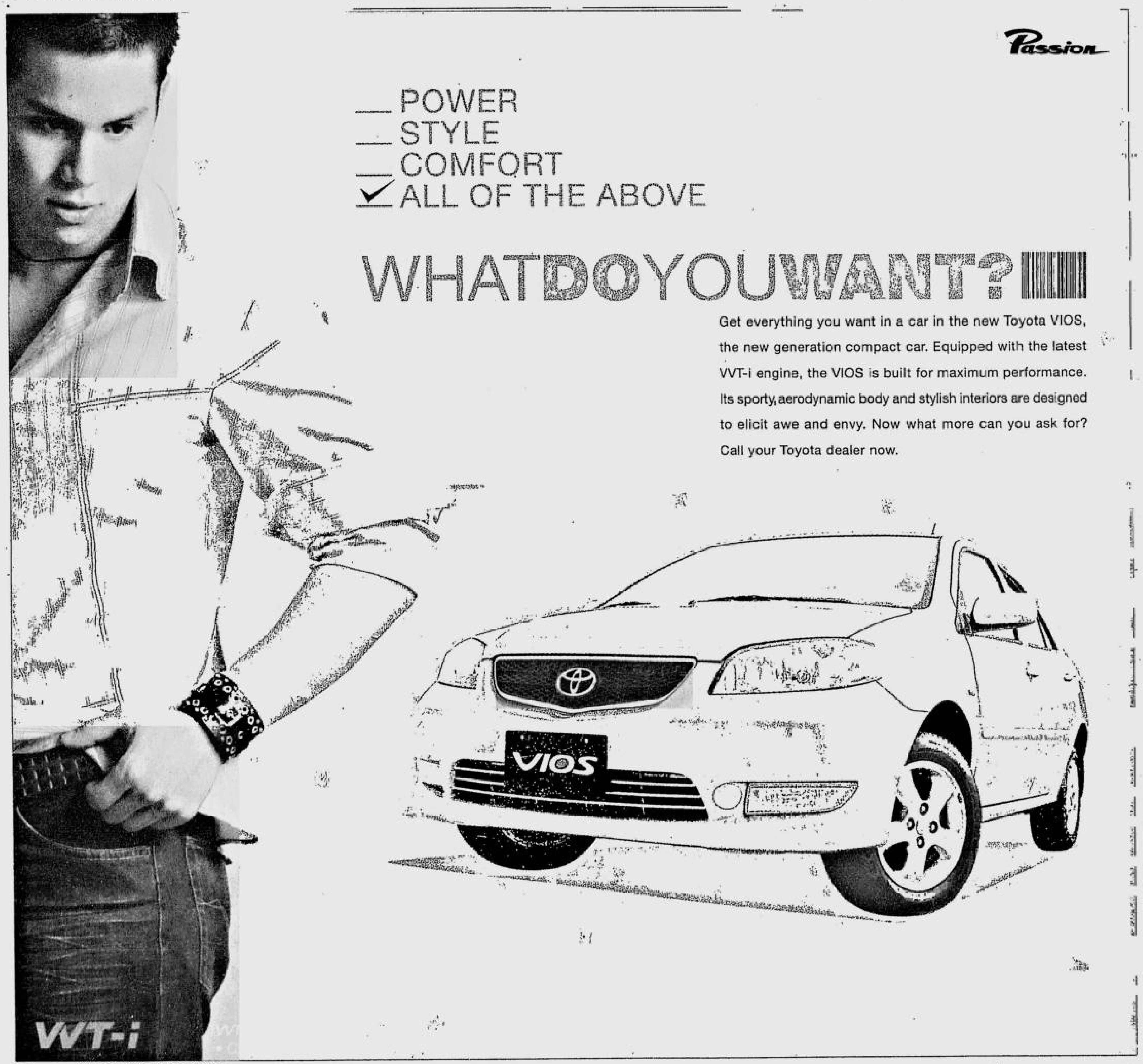

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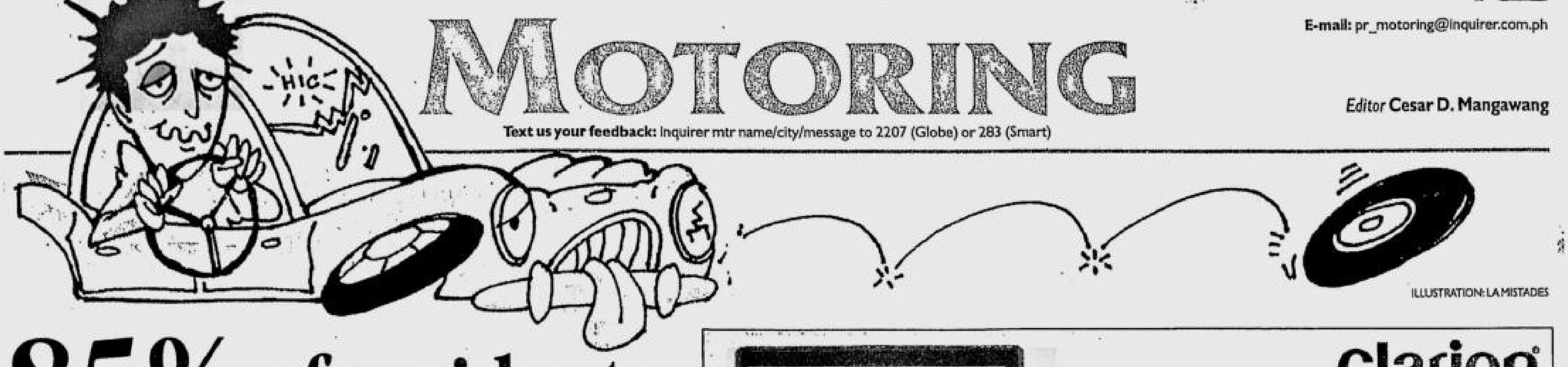

ILLUSTRATION: LA MISTADES

85% of accidents attributed to human error, say law enforcers

By Tessa R. Salazar

A CAR, no matter how stylish or safe, still runs in the hands of its human driver, which is why officers of the Philippine National Police and Traffic Management Group say that it isn't all that surprising to see that more than 85 percent of road accidents are caused by human error. The PNP and TMG 2003 record backs this percentage.

"Though the figures do state the obvious, for Filipinos, you really have to state the obvious. The errors committed were due to the fact that proper caution was thrown to the wind," said Daisy Jacobo, chief of the Land Transportation Office traffic safety education chief. She added that these figures should form the basis for policy and decision making of lawmakers.

Miscalculation

The top human-caused vehicular accident involved "miscalculation" resulting in 4,222 incidents of vehicular collisions and crashing into nonmoving objects (such as parked vehicles). Accidents resulting from drunk driving were recorded at 94. An alarming rise of accidents attributed to overspeeding was noted, with 2,908 cases compared to 162 in 2002, and hit-and-run cases likewise increased sharply to 673 (from 280 in 2002).

Accidents resulting from bad overtaking rose to 2,402 in 2003 from 107 in 2002, overloading resulting to accidents was recorded at 1,174. Notable are the overloading accidents despite the availability of a portable axle weighing equipment in the major entry and exit points of Metro Manila—Sta. Rita (northbound) and Sta. Inez Plaza (southbound).

Recorded accidents

The sharp increases in the number of recorded accidents, however, can also be attributable to better traffic incident monitoring systems and equipment. The Department of Public Works and Highways employs the Traffic Accident Recording and Analysis System (Taras) patterned after the Crash Statistics of the Vic Roads Authority in the state of Victoria, Australia.

Taras is deployed in 16 DPWH regional offices in the country. Networked computers are capable of data entry and monitoring of traffic accidents of national roads (based on the traffic

85%/D2

Clarion
Car Multimedia and Audio

Evolving Technology With
a Touch of Intelligence

In an environment where ease-of-use is of utmost importance, Clarion refuses to sacrifice safety in its ongoing pursuit for the cutting edge. That's why Clarion has adopted several measures to increase driver attention, such as equipping its main unit with a function display screen that offers a comprehensive , full-screen portal to all entertainment sources. Clarion goes a step further by employing an onscreen operation tree and menu layout, providing you with a single, easy-to-use interface that enables intuitive access to all audio and visual content, including DVD, CD, and TV tuner.

Equipped with the Music Catcher system that lets you freely record, play and erase tunes using a built-in memory, with the familiarity of a CD changer. It can store up to about 80 tunes* (in LP mode) as six CDs worth of high quality music date files, so you'll no longer have to carry around a bunch of CDs. And offering compatibility with MP3 and WMA compressed audio formats, as well as CD-R/RW storage media formats. it supports the needs of car audio users in the information age. What's more, the 80 Variable Colour illumination adds a brilliant stylishness to your car interior with a choice of 80 selectable colour patterns.

AM/FM DVD CENTRE

AM/FM CD/MP3/WMA CENTRE/DIGITAL RECORDER NEW

Multicolour Displays to vividly choreograph your dash
Toggle through 80 different colour patterns to match your main unit's display panel or illuminated display characters with the interior colour scheme of your vehicle. This feature also matches the main unit's illuminated function buttons to the desired colour for the ultimate customisable look.

Music Catcher System
With its entrance into the mass-storage main unit market, Clarion unveils its exclusive Music Catcher System. Boasting memory, Music Catcher allows one to freely record, play and erase up to approximately six CDs worth of music data files. By using the Music Catcher System, no longer is there a need to carry around that cumbersome CD storage case, or risk damage to your favourite CD. This system also eliminates the need for space-taking CD changers.

MUSIC CATCHER
Memory
CD Music Date
REC
Music Catcher
Your CD
CD Play
Songs

You Can Record
● HQ MODE 265 minutes (High Quality)
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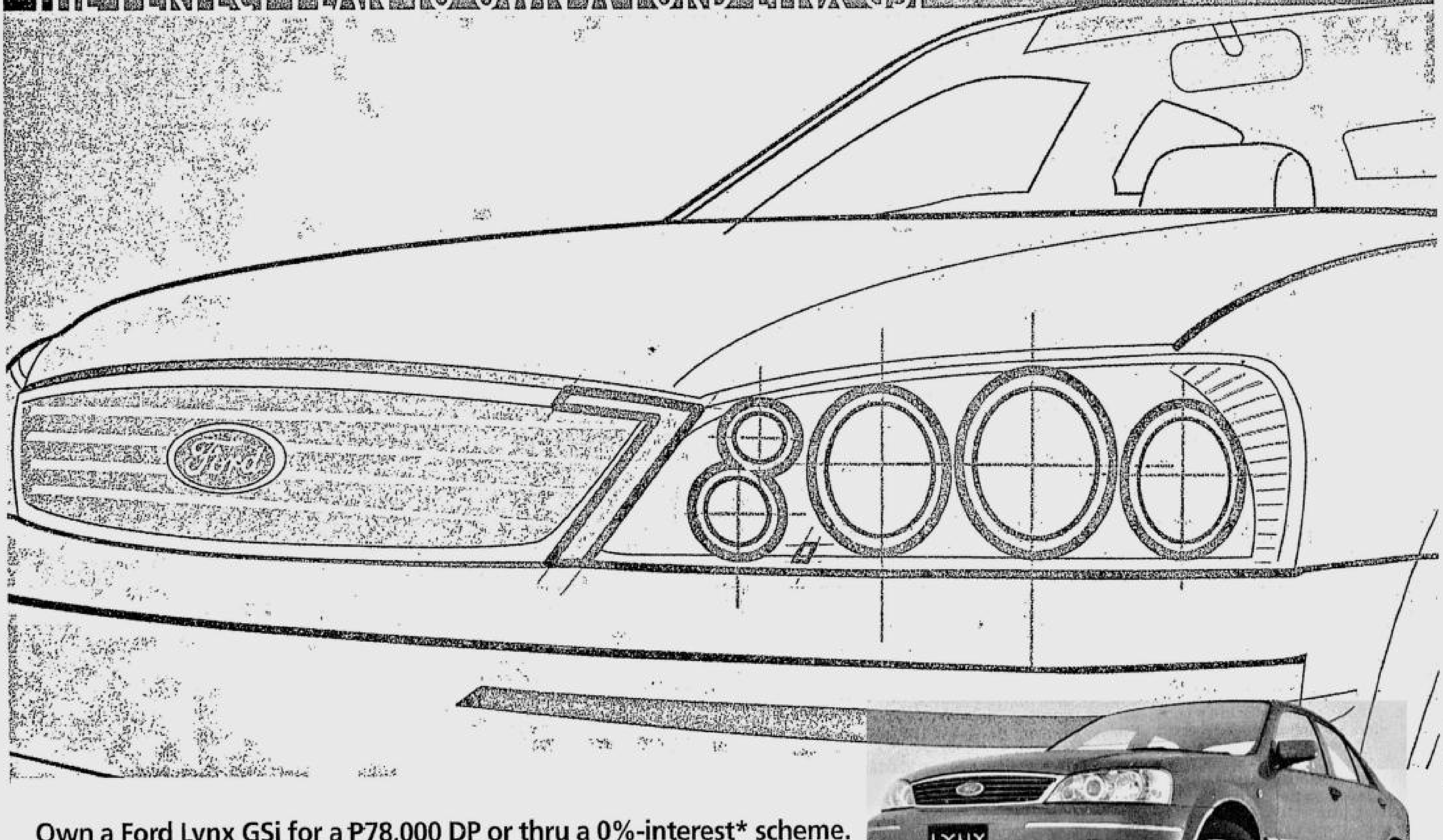
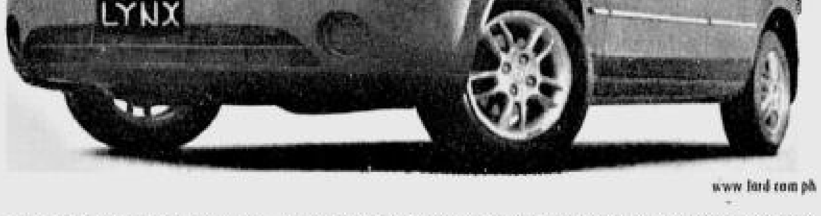
WARNING Only units purchased in the Philippines w/ validated Philippine Warranty Card will be serviced

THE PERFECT PLAN TO OWN A FORD LYNX GSi

Ford
No Boundaries





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1.6-liter DOHC 16-valve engine with Rapid Response Engineering • Speed-sensitive power-assisted steering • All-wheel disc brakes • Quad projector halogen headlamps • In-dash CD player with 4-speaker system •The Ford Lynx GSi--designed for you to own.

www.ford.com.ph

*Applicable to 20% DP 12-month financing scheme. Promo valid from Sept. 1-30, 2004 Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4428, Series of 2004

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ERA 24-HOUR EMERGENCY ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

Kudos to Revo winners; NLE bonus

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

THE ONE good thing about the rehabilitated Northern Luzon Expressway when it's finally completed is the savings we would all enjoy insofar as operating cost of our vehicles is concerned.

At the moment, many motorists are unanimous in saying the newly asphalted Expressway is as smooth as a baby's behind, auguring well for a bump-free ride from virtually the entry point in Balintawak to the final exit in Sta. Ines, Pampanga.

But the ultimate reward that is not yet fully appreciated at the beginning but will soon stand out like a sore thumb is the much-reduced vehicle operating costs each one of us will realize once the expanded, much-improved NLE is fully operational.

* * *

You see, vehicles using the NLE are classisifed into Class 1 (cars), Class 2 (buses) and Class 3 (trucks, 10-wheelers and haulers).

When the NLE rehabilitation is finally over and the Expressway is fully operational, Class 1 vehicles will net P0.95 savings per kilometer, Class 2 vehicles P7.44 and Class 3 vehicles P5.03. That's a lot, to say the least.

As per studies of the UP Planades, UP-Diliman in Quezon City, Class 1 vehicles consume P9.51 in wear and tear as against P8.50 with a rehabilitated NLE, Class 2 from P32.92 to P25.48 and Class 3 from P27.48 to P22.45.

Everything's coming up roses that I wish NLE's expansion would soon be a reality. I can't wait to see the popping of cork to signify its grand inauguration.

* * *

After the highly dramatic awarding of millions of cash prizes last week to the winners of the unique Revo Photo Contest comes the photo caravan to be staged shortly by Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.

The photo caravan will display the contributions of the hundred Revo owners who have joined the smashingly successful Revo Reflections photo competition. The contest, launched on July 19, was a novelty move by TMP in search of the photo that would best describe Revo's rich contributions to the Filipino lifestyle.

* * *

I didn't know the Tamaraw FX Revo has been with us 13 years now. Really, how time flies.

It was Revo's distinct closeness with the Pinoy psyche that TMP decided to come up with a truly Filipino event touching on Filipino lives in different ways. The Revo Reflections photo contest told it all.

The judges are artists in their own right. John Chua is a noted professional photographer. Kidlat Tahimik De Guia is an award-winning short-filmmaker. Susan Calo-Medina hosts the lifestyle show "Travel Time." Rino Maniquis is art director of Dentsu Philippines. And, yes, Raymond Rodriguez, TMP's vice president for marketing, is a famed art lover and known for his exquisite taste of everything beautiful and dramatic.

Although I missed the awarding on Sept. 10 at the Cortes de las Palmas of the Alabang Town Center, due to a previous commitment in the country, I had a feel of what happened that evening through the blow-by-blow account of Ariel de Jesus that was validated, of course, by the trustworthy and hardworking Elijah Sue Marcia.

* * *

Joaquin S. Ruste's "Dama: Street Scene" was the unanimous winner. The photo captured Revo FX drivers playing the popular parlor game "dama" while waiting for passengers on a major thoroughfare in Bacolod City, Ruste's hometown. He won a whopping P100,000 for his feat.

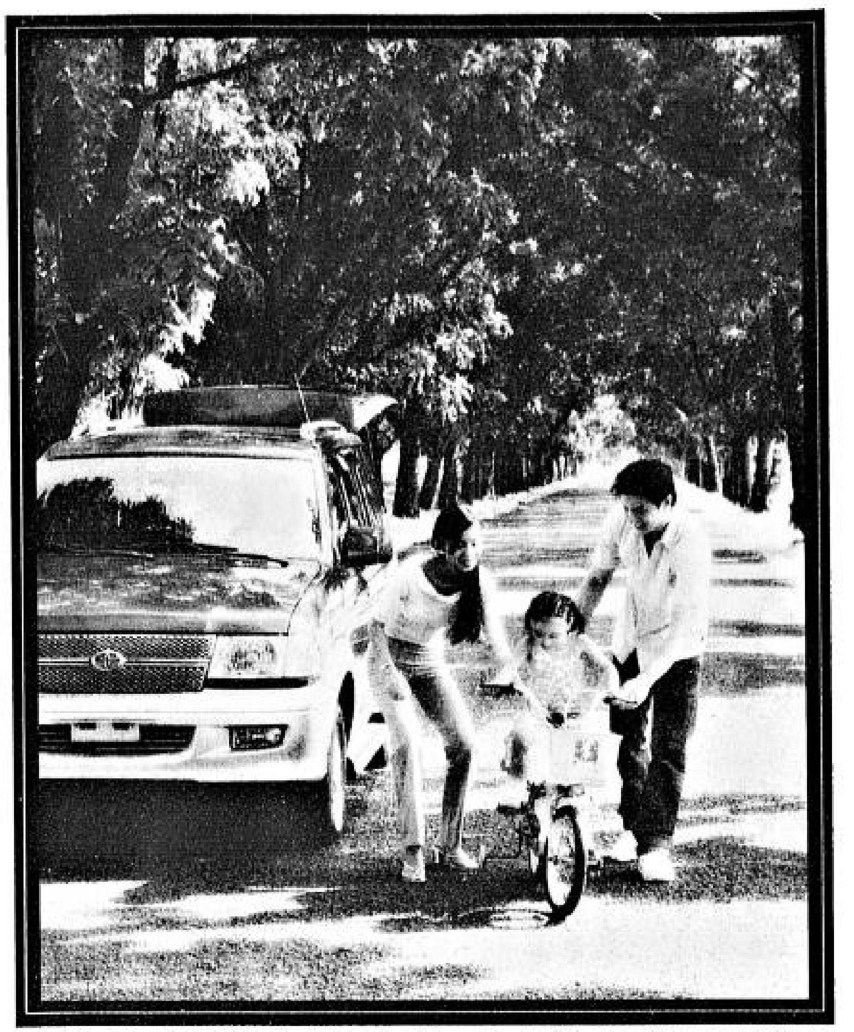
The second prize of P75,000 went to Henson Y. Ong of New Manila, Quezon City, for his entry, "Step by Step," which depicted the Revo as an integral part of the family's most priceless achievements, such as when a first-born child makes her first steps.

Reynaldo C. Mondez of Taguig, Metro Manila, won third prize worth of P50,000 for his entry "Balikbayan." It illustrated the Revo as an OFW's prized possession, together with a family waiting for him to finally come home after years of hard labor in a foreign land. The Revo being the bearer of good news, it was there at the airport to welcome the OFW back, and carry *pasalubongs* for his eager kids.

The consolation prize winners worth P10,000 each were Lemuel C. Arrogante with "Fly High" from Subangdaku, Mandaue; Samuel P. De Leon with "After a Day's Work" from Luzon Avenue, Quezon City; Normito R. Alvarez with "Rev Up Your Life" from Las Piñas City; Henson Y. Ong with "Fishing Buddies" from New Manila, Quezon City; and Jesse M. Narrazo with "Wedded Bliss" from Bacolod City.

Extremely proud of its Revo photo contest, TMP has put up the Revo Museo, a gallery of the winning photos and other entries, in a roving tour at all Toyota Metro Manila and provincial dealers from September to October, and all SM malls nationwide from October to December.

Here's a glass to the unique concept that has brought together the *masa*'s humble aspirations through a snap shot of the Revo.



"STEP by Step," depicted the Revo as an integral part of the family's most priceless achievements, such as when a first-born child makes her first steps.

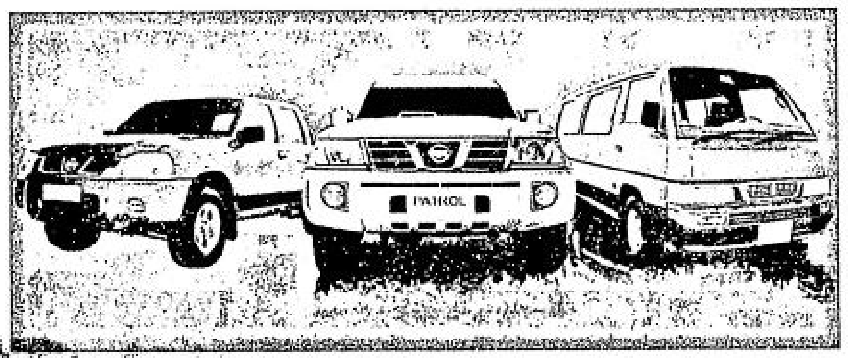
* * *

I welcome the arrival of Ford Trekker on Aug. 25. I wasn't there. But I was told the affair, held at the Ilustrado on Calle Real de Palacio, Intramuros, Manila, was a smash hit.

The day also marked the launch of the 2004 Ford Conservation and Environmental Grants Program. Also attending the occasion were the 2003 grantees who gave an update on how their projects have progressed since they received their grants last January.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Change those rusty wiper blades now. More rains are seen in the horizons.



BPI, Mitsubishi launch Auto Madness nationwide

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines and BPI Family Savings Bank team up to introduce the most attractive and affordable auto financing promo this month dubbed as Auto Madness.

It will be the first BPI Auto Madness to be done on a nationwide basis, as it takes advantage of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines wide network in the country. Both BPI and Mitsubishi are optimistic that the Auto Madness promo will surely bring people to the Mitsubishi showrooms considering the attractive financing packages which can be tailor fitted on the customers' requirements.

The Mitsubishi-BPI Auto Madness features the lowest effective interest rates ever to be applied on auto financing. In addition, financing the Mitsubishi Lancer, Adventure, Outlander, Space Gear, Strada or even the Pajero has never been this easy with the Auto Madness' lowest down payment plans, low monthly payments extended up to 72 months, zero-interest plans, and even a combination of both low down payment and low monthly payment plans.

Low down payment

As an example, the new Lancer 1.6 GLX can be availed for as low as P64,700 downpayment only. With this down payment, buyer can extend payments up to 72 months and pay monthly installments of P13,294.

An Adventure GLX diesel can be acquired for just P58,000 down payment and monthly installments of P14,094 for 72 months. An Outlander AWD standard model can be owned for as low as P77,000 down payment while the Spacegear standard model at P87,000 down payment, with monthly installments of P24,379 and P22,254, respectively, up to 72 months. In addition, those who will avail of the low down payment plan gets additional discounts which they may apply for comprehensive insurance cost or use it to purchase accessories.

Low-monthly payments

The Auto Madness also features low monthly payments and zero-interest plans for selected models. For instance, the lowest monthly payments for the Lancer 1.6 GLX is P6,941 for 72 months with a down payment of 50 percent. A zero-interest scheme is also available for this model up to 24 months with the same down payment.

On the Adventure GLX, monthly payments can go as low as P7,126 for 72 months with 50 percent down payment, while Outlander and Spacegear models go as low as P11,674 and P11,114 monthly, respectively.

The Auto Madness will run at all Mitsubishi dealers nationwide until Sept. 30.

Shell launches new promo

PILIPINAS Shell's giving away over P8 million worth of cash prizes through the "Fish tayo, Milyonaryo!" promo which will run from Aug. 28 to Nov. 15.

Every P500 purchase (single or accumulated) of Shell fuels, lubricants, Shellane, Select and Shell shop items, in participating Shell service stations nationwide, entitles each customer to a scratch card, which also serves as raffle coupon. If the scratch card reveals Dolphina, Rufa Mae Quinto's character in GMA 7's "Marinara," the customer receives an instant prize indicated on the scratch card. Customers may also use the scratch cards to join the raffle draws.

Two monthly draws will be held at Shell House in Makati City on Sept. 24 and Oct. 20. There will be three winners per draw—one winner from Metro Manila, North/South Luzon and Visayas/Mindanao area.

Each monthly draw winner will receive P50,000 in cash and will have a chance to win more cash prizes in the "1M Peraquarium game." The peraquarium game will be held at GMA's "Idol Ko si Kap" TV program. The first and second peraquarium games will be aired on "Idol ko si Kap" on GMA 7 on Oct. 16 and Nov. 13, respectively.

The grand raffle draw will be held on Nov. 25 at Shell House in Makati City. There will be three winners: one from Metro Manila, one from North/South Luzon, and one from Visayas/Mindanao.

Making car repairs more efficient

THE ROLE of automobile electronics has become increasingly significant in modern vehicles. From 18 percent in 1990, the share of electronics in automobile production now stands at 25 percent and is expected to reach 35 percent in 2010.

As a result, vehicle servicing has become more complicated and technical due to the nature of the components and systems now fitted to most modern cars. Many car problems can no longer be solved simply by a neighborhood mechanic and his wrench.

In response to this growing necessity for vehicle diagnostics and repair service that would match increasingly complex vehicle systems, Robert Bosch Inc.—the global leader in automotive technology and equipment, car multimedia and power tools—is adopting the Bosch Car Service Concept in the Philippines. The concept is part of a global initiative to identify and accredit workshops and garages that could offer a one-stop shop for diagnostics and spare parts.

Workshops

There are 288 Bosch Service workshops in Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines). In the Philippines, Bosch has initially identified 29 workshops nationwide for accreditation as part of the Bosch Car Service program—16 in Metro Manila, five in other parts of Luzon, two in the Visayas and six in Mindanao.

Bosch Car Service brings together everything that is needed to carry out successful testing, diagnosis and repair, systems know-how, technical information, test devices, technical consulting and spare parts in original equipment quality.

"Bosch's know-how from its own original equipment feeds directly into the development of testing technology and is also made available for training purposes. This synergy is something that is unique to Bosch," said Mr. Noske, automotive aftermarket and aftersales service manager.

Technology

Bosch test equipment technology optimizes the combination of hardware and software for rapid troubleshooting, qualified repair and high time savings. Along with the testing equipment, the Esitronic software package allows mechanics to carry out diagnostic tests on passenger cars regardless of the make or model. One hundred twenty specialists are working full time in making Esitronic even more effective by further increasing the size of the vehicle database. Bosch invests around 15 million Euros annually for the continuous development of this comprehensive software.

Another important part of Bosch Car Service is the service training. Every year, around 14,000 vehicle mechanics from across Europe attend Bosch seminars to develop their knowledge and skills.

Prestone Fluid for dependable brakes

APART from the occasional monsoon rains, tropical depressions batter the country almost every week.

And for one reason or another, even a sudden downpour can leave several places such as Metro Manila submerged in water. Time and again, motorists have been reminded to avoid driving in flooded streets as this can wreak havoc on a vehicle's components—engine, transmission, underbody components, etc. But one of the worst—and unfortunately, the first—places floodwater can attack the vehicle is the brake system as this is part of the contact surface—the wheels and tires.

This is the reason we need quality brake fluid products like Prestone, a trusted brand in automotive car care products.

Prestone Brake Fluid is actually a scientifically compounded and chemically balanced formula for use in all types of automobile and truck hydraulic brake systems, whether equipped with disc, drum or combination of both. It is specially formulated to provide dependable and long-lasting operation of the hydraulic brake system, whatever the operating condition.

This formulation uses carefully selected lubricant base, blended with the highest quality diluents for effective and fade-free braking over a wide range of operating temperatures.

The presence of moisture in the brake system lowers the boiling point of the fluid. Eventually, the continuous operation of your brakes may cause the brake fluid to boil.. This will result to vapor that will form in the brake system. And since vapor is compressible, this will cause the brake pedal to feel soft and/or not work at all.

It gets into the fluid because brake fluid is hygroscopic, which is its ability to absorb moisture. This can be absorbed through the brake master cylinder reservoir, the wheel cylinders and permeable brake hoses.

It is very important to use a high-quality brake fluid like Prestone as it has a high wet boiling point of 150°C compared to the DOT3 standard of 140°C.

85% of accidents attributed to human. . .

From page D1

accident report form from trained police).

Monitoring map

Taras uses the database of the Locational Referencing System (LRS) where officers can pinpoint in proximity the actual road sections in the Philippines where the accident took place (national roads, in particular).

This serves as the Road and Bridge Inventory Administration's monitoring map so one can pinpoint the accident-prone areas in the country.

"Peculiar" accidents have also been recorded, such as those labeled "self-accidents" (806 cases), bad turning (1,543 cases vs 88 cases in 2002).

Also rising sharply were accidents caused by using cellular phones while driving (47 cases in 2003 vs 3 in 2002).

Accidents resulting from mechanical defects registered 2,003 in 2003 (in 2002, 284).

The rise in recorded cases of overspeeding and bad overtaking was given emphasis recently by law enforcers.

Registered vehicles

There were 4,292,272 motor vehicles registered in 2003, 2,717,270 of which were four wheelers (65 percent) and 1,470,383 two wheelers (35 percent). That number is expected to rise sharply as well, with the sales boost from two wheels expected in 2004 to rise 60.71 percent.

More than 40 percent of all motor vehicles in the Philippines are concentrated in Metro Manila.

Last year, 16,418 traffic accidents were recorded. Nearly half of them—8,000—were fatal. Eleven thousand four hundred eleven caused damage to property.

Seventy-nine percent of Metro Manila residents make daily trips.

Approximately 98 percent of the travel demands are met by road transportation. The rest is accounted for by air and sea transport. "This shows we have to put our act together. We have to establish order on the road," Jacobo stressed.

Public transport, she added would have to carry the brunt of social and economic mobility of the people.

Centralized data base needed

According to the LTO, though there is much more to be desired, such as there are no centralized and organized data base system, no methodical reporting system and no government agency in charge but the road accident data gathering has improved. Data gatherers are now getting the percentages and they are now getting more details.

"A centralized data base is needed. Why? The PNP has its own statistics and so does the DOH as gathered from the different hospitals. But they don't tally."

InqBox
Question of the Week
What stories do you like to read in the Motoring section?
Texters hus messages R printd in Tuesday's InqBox wil each receiv a Guyito stuffd toy! U
Key in: inquirer mot name/city/message.
Text your answers to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart).
(Maximum of 160 characters)

CALTEX country chair Randy Johnson (right) presents to Energy Secretary Vincent Perez (third from left) one of the services offered at Xpress Lube

Helping street kids find new life

Text and photo by Charles E. Buban

STREET children represent a growing problem in the Philippines. Currently estimated to be over 200,000—with half of them living in Metro Manila—they are homeless, and usually parentless, youngsters for whom each day is a battle for survival.

Three years ago, ChevronTexaco, through its wholly owned affiliate Caltex Philippines, decided to address this problem by sealing an agreement with the Education Research and Development Assistance Foundation and the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Foundation to launch the Caltex In-Plant Training Program (CIPT).

Under the program, students graduating from the two foundations can obtain practical work experience in participating Caltex service stations, learning, for example, how to operate site equipment, conduct basic automotive tests and handle cash and receipts.

They are all given guidance in customer service, while some are trained to become mechanics.

Helping communities

"Our company always makes it a policy to seek every opportunity where we can help communities in need," said Caltex Lubricants Reseller support manager Benjie Latorre during the formal inauguration last month of the 62nd Xpress Lube bay located at the new Caltex SLEX Superstation 1 (in the northbound lane of the South Luzon Expressway).

These young CIPT graduates are trained to provide automotive services such as Xpress Oil Change Packages, Xpress Maintenance Check, Engine Tune-up and specialized services including brake fluid testing, transmission servicing, radiator flushing, battery testing and auto detailing.

Supported by Caltex

Disadvantaged youth such as former street children and who are in their last year of vocational training are supported by Caltex Xpress Lube through the CIPT program.

"CIPT represents an important extension of Caltex's existing Street-to-School program, adding a critical element of sustainability to an effort that has provided shelter, scholarships and training for nearly 500 of the Philippines' most desperate and vulnerable young people," revealed Latorre to a program that started in July 1999 to show how a partnership of NGOs, government agencies and business can effectively address social ills.

"The CIPT helps ensure that ChevronTexaco's social investments make a permanent contribution to improving Philippine life, demonstrating that company assistance does not merely consist of one-shot funding," said Caltex country chair Randy Johnson.

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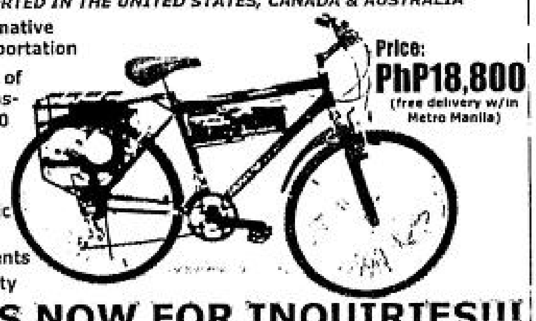

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CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS ARE NOW ACCEPTED IN SELECTED SHOWROOMS

FORD CONFIDENTLY OFFERS THE LYNX GSI

Saving up for that first car is quite an experience. It is gratification that comes from all those months of having to eat humble pie-literally and figuratively. Think of setting aside some cash from your movie, date, and gadget allocation just to impress the girls. But who's kidding whom? Don't we know how nice it is to see your reflection on glass buildings as you drive by in your new car. Take that further, enhance the reflection, and drive by in a brand new Ford Lynx GSI.

This month of September, the Ford Lynx GSI is Ford Group Philippines' confident venture to your requirements of space, versatility, and style. A proposition sweetened by two options on the Lynx GSI manual transmission variant- a low down of P78,000 or an option of the lowest monthly payment term of P13,350 for 48 months, makes owning a new Lynx GSI worth it all. Additionally, both the manual and automatic transmission variants have a flexible offer of 0% interest for a term of 12 month-offers all exclusive through Ford Credit

To impress her even more, here is the Ford Lynx GSI as you'll get to know it- Its 1.6 DOHC, 4-cylinder, 16 valve engine balances power of 118 ps/ 5,500 rpm and a torque of 145 Nm/4,000 rpm, becoming a tandem of performance tuned for excellent handling and drivability. Believe me she'll think its all you.

As you cruise along the beach-lined road for a weekend sojourn, you'll have people notice the horizontal chrome grille, and 14"aluminun alloy wheels make the Lynx GSI a handsome ride. Team those with soothing, chill-out sounds from your single-in-dash CD, and 4speaker system, and set the mood for a day of leisure and relaxation. Let the Quad Projector Halogen Headlamps that feature a wider and longer beam make night driving more comfortable, during the drive back to the city.

As boasted in all Ford vehicles, safety and security is hardly compromised. Your date will be thankful for the Rear Door Catcher which is a Lynx-exclusive feature, found on both rear door frames that keep the doors from jamming especially when forced into the cabin during collisions. Other safety features in the Lynx GSI include Side Door Impact Beams, and Crumple Zones that absorb the blow during impact, as well as the reinforced body frames of the Triple H Body Construction, these devices all protect the vehicle's occupants from serious danger.

Also you'll feel safe to leave your vehicles in the parking lots even as you enjoy an evening out because of the Steering Shaft Declutching Device, that disengages the steering system from the wheels when your car is forced into by burglars, i.e. the wheels won't turn even if you move the steering wheel. And a Window Anti-Jam Protection found on the driver's side automatically rolls the window down when your arm gets caught between the window and pane when you pay for parking. The Ford Lynx GSI also comes with a standard first aid kit for emergencies and is enrolled in a 24- hour Emergency Roadside Assistance.

The Ford Lynx GSI will indeed make your first vehicle purchase quite and experience.

For inquiries and test drives, you may contact any of the Ford dealerships: Ford Alabang, Ford Balintawak, Ford Commonwealth, Ford EDSA , Ford Libis, Ford Makati, Ford Manila, Ford Quezon Avenue, Ford Shaw Blvd., Ford Bacolod, Ford Cabanatuan, Ford Cagayan de Oro, Ford Cavite, Ford Cebu, Ford Dagupan, Ford Davao, Ford Iloilo, Ford Pampanga, Ford San Pablo.

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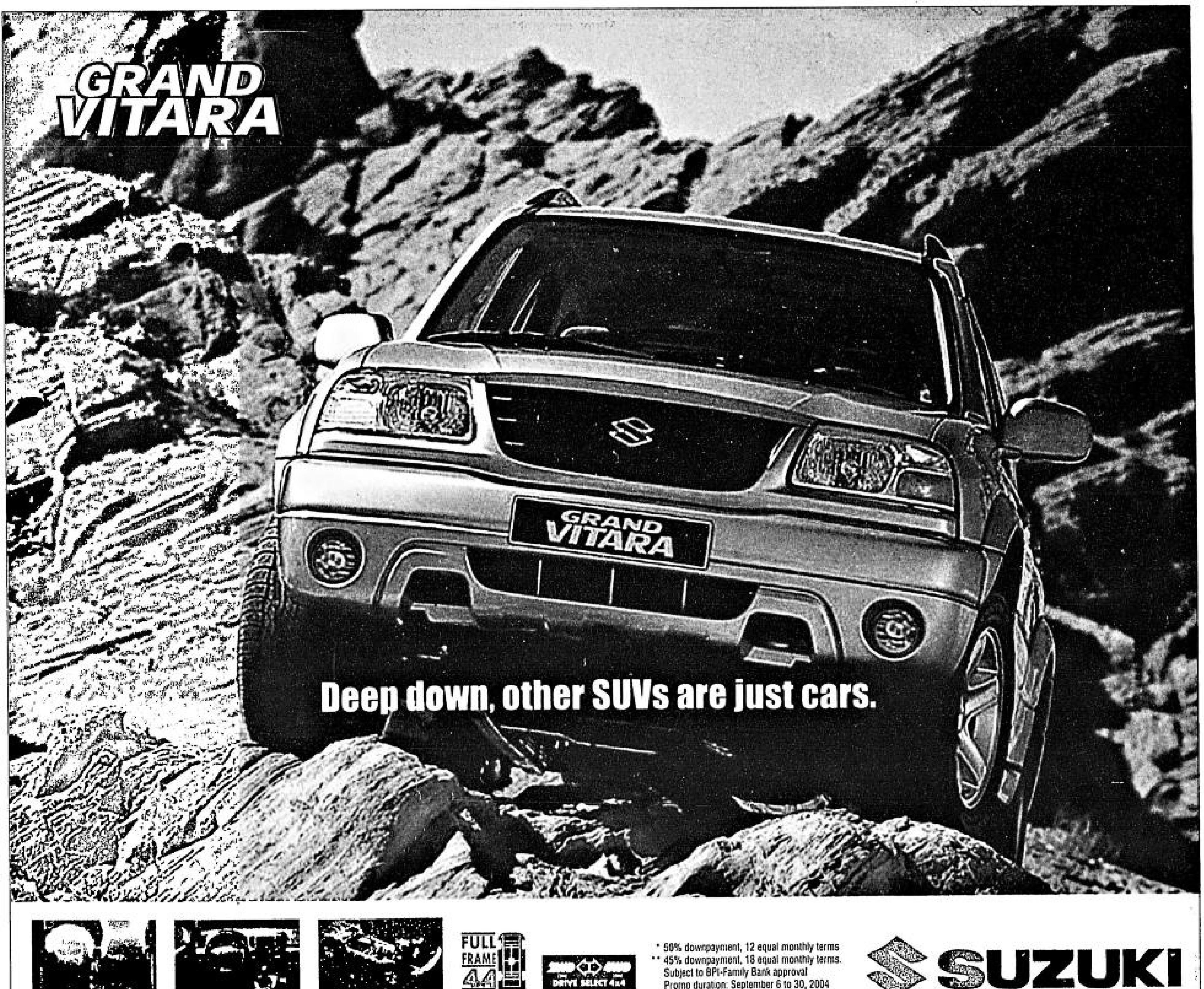

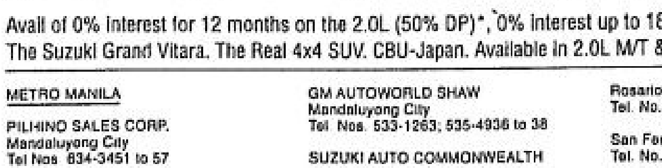

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Swift, smooth V6 Accord

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

UNLIKE the 3.0-liter V6 Toyota Camry that was formally launched at a lavish dinner in a five-star hotel, the 3.0-liter V6 Honda Accord slipped into town without any fanfare last month. Honda Cars Philippines Inc.'s decision to skip the usual debut speaks volumes about its confidence in the superior salability of its product over the V6 competition, the Camry and the Nissan Cefiro 300EX.

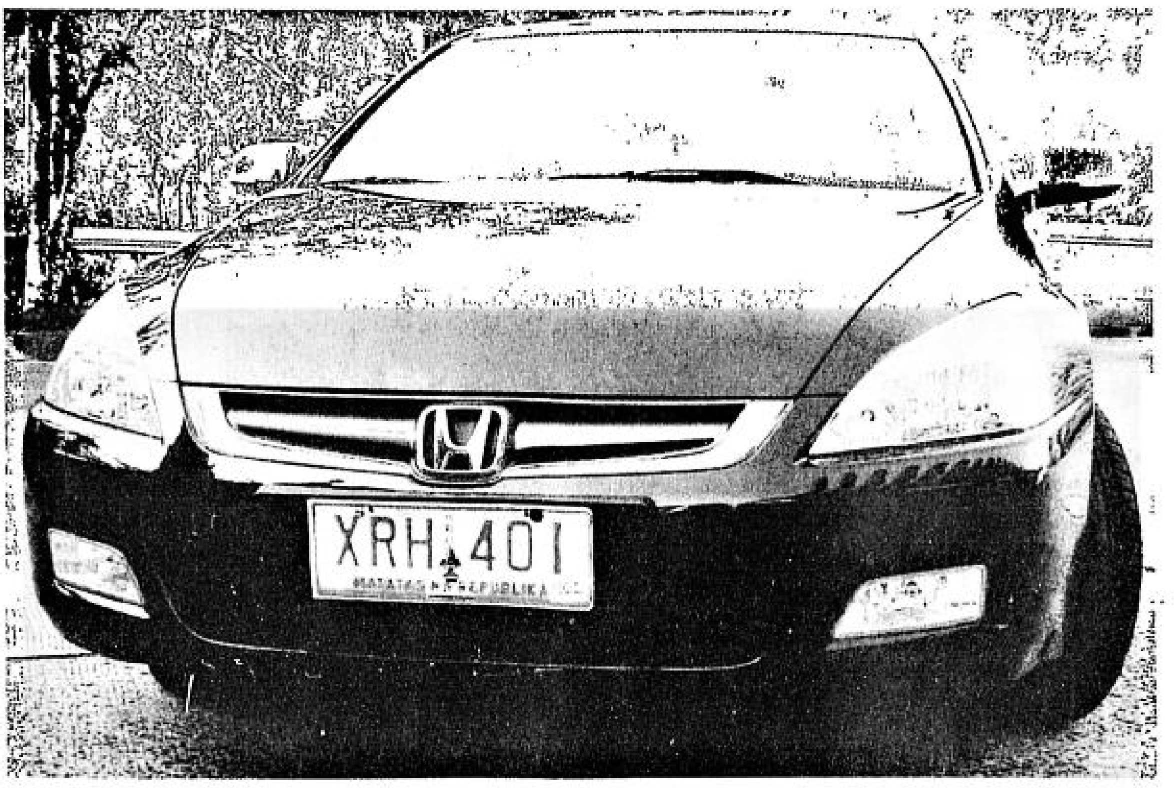
After all, the seventh generation Accord, which was introduced in the United States last year, landed on Car and Driver's 10 Best List for 2003, the 17th time it has appeared in the 21-year history of the award. No wonder Honda is subtly marketing the V6 Accord here with an unpretentious print ad that simply declares, "You can't describe it until you drive it."

Stunning

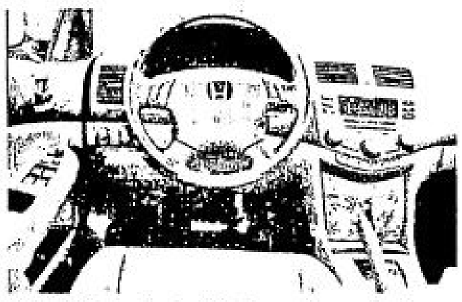
I took the cue and drove a nighthawk black unit for a week recently. Remembering the energetic performance of the 2.0-liter Accord that I test-drove last year, I naturally expected the 3.0-liter version to be much faster. But the swiftness of the V6 Accord literally stunned me.

If you are driving the V6 Accord on the Skyway, you will soon find yourself traveling at 160 km/hr. Before you know it, you are doing 180 km/hr, then 190 until strong crosswinds and headwinds buffeting the rarefied heights of the Skyway prevent you from hitting the benchmark 200.

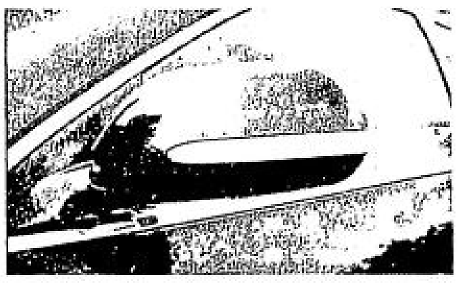
And this is supposed to be a family sedan? The Accord's 3.0-liter SOHC VTEC six, mated to a sophisticated, smooth-shifting five-speed automatic transmission with electronic throttle control, produces 240 ps peak horsepower at 6250 rpm and 29.3 kg-m/5,000 rpm max torque. Fact is, the V6 Accord's class-leading horsepower (the Camry's is 212, the Cefiro's is 220) would be obscene if its VTEC engine were not so smooth, refined and quiet.



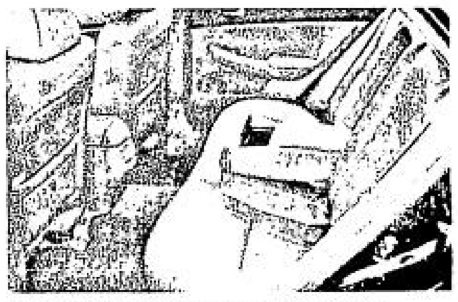
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: a clear turn signal lamp on each of the power door mirrors distinguishes the V6 Accord from the 4-cyl. models. PHOTOS BY: AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA



WHAT'S new in the V6 Accord: woodgrain trim and cruise control buttons on the steering wheel



DISTINGUISHING touch: the clear turn signal lamp on the power door mirror of the V6 Accord



SPACIOUS leg room, a center armrest, comfy leather seats plus four cupholders for Accord passengers

Potent

On the other hand, although the V6 Accord's potent powerplant seems to qualify it as a high-performance car, its soft rear suspension reestablishes it as a family four-door. Honda obviously designed the chassis with riding comfort rather than sporty handling and cornering ability uppermost in mind. But it is a nicely balanced chassis nonetheless with sufficient grip on the road at speeds 100 km/h and below. The V6 Accord is agile enough when dashing in and out of urban traffic and in overtaking situations. Its small turning circle makes it a breeze to park almost anywhere.

The trade-off, of course, is that the V6 Accord drinks a lot more fuel than its less powerful counterparts.

Viewed from any angle, the V6 Accord looks exactly the same as the 2003 2.0-liter model (which has been phased out) and the 2004 2.4-liter variant except for two things: a clear turn lamp on each of the power door mirrors and an electric sunroof with smoked glass and tilt mechanism. Since this column has already previously described the 2003 Accord's roomy interior and excellent ergonomics (Sept. 11, 2003 "On the Road") and all these features have been carried over to the 2004 V6 model, I will limit myself to what is new.

Cruise control

Woodgrain trim has been added to the leather-wrapped steering wheel which now has cruise control buttons. The front console now has ambient lighting and the map light is door-cooperated in the V6. In terms of safety, the V6 Accord is equipped with side airbags as well as dual SRS airbags up front. A Traction Control System has been incorporated in the V6 Accord to prevent wheel spin and increase stability while disc brakes with ABS on all four wheels is standard across the board in all Accord models.

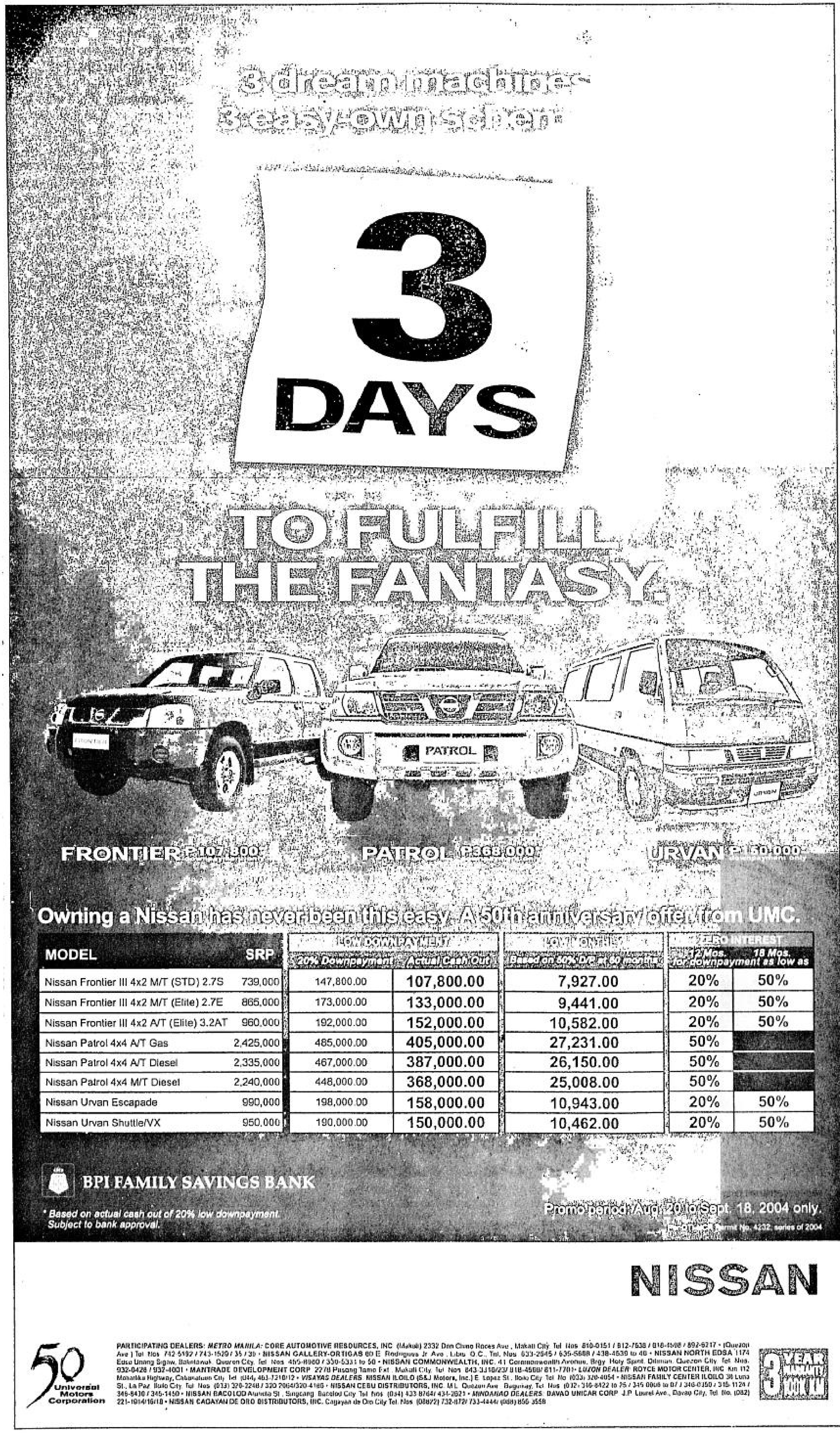
Bottom line, with power upgraded to 3.0 V6 VTEC level, the 2004 Accord can be described as a performance car wannabe with the creature comforts of a family sedan. Swift, smooth, elegant, spacious and impeccably built, the V6 Accord is close to midsize sedan perfection and at P1.6 million should give German sports sedans costing twice as much a run for their money.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Lead me not into temptation, I can find it myself.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.



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Bacolod Inasal the Ilocano way

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

MAY I have the recipe for Bacolod *Chicken Inasal*? I'm a teacher who is about to retire and would like to set up a business.

EMILIA REYNO

When it comes to *pinakbet* and *dinengdeng*, I have much to say. But *inasal*? I leave it to the Ilonggos. Luckily, I was with Peque Gallaga and his wonderful brood last Saturday to celebrate yet two more feathers on his, by now, over decorated cap—The Gawad CCP Award for Film and his up-coming movie "Nang Taon na Naging Blonde ang mga Pinoy!" The "price" of dinner was his sharing with me all he knew about *inasal*. Here's what he says:

What makes Bacolod Inasal so special that it doesn't taste the same anywhere else?

I don't know... I don't know if my memory serves me right... but I don't think *inasal* is a specialty that emerges from "time immemorial" like the other Negros delicacies such as the *piaya*, the *lumpia ubod*, *tira tira*, *dulce gatas*, *panara* and the other delights from the *manoglibod*'s vast woven *bilao* balanced on her head—and it would be tough imagining chicken *inasal* nestled on that same *bilao*.

I know that *inasal* was offered at bus stops for a "salapi" (50 centavos) for a bracing meal before you started on a hellish, bumpy ride into the hinterlands; but it wasn't standard fare for anyone. Or it simply wasn't as accessible except to travelers at the time.

I do remember, however, that it entered collective consciousness in the early '50s when the *inasal* left the bus depots and started sprouting along the sea wall all the way to State Theater and, all of a sudden, households could send for *inasal* to supplement (or make up) their evening meal. As in the case of any small community, some products gained a reputation and it wasn't long before you sent out for *inasal*, (with the instruction) "to make sure that you bought it from Tya Sabel's stand; Tya Sabel being Isabel Velez who later on "produced" Liza Garrucho who turned their stall into a more viable concern along with some Gamboas and Villanuevas... their whole enterprise sold later to the Cajilis who now boast of Chicken House, one of the places where you get the real deal... the quintessential Negros Inasal.

So what's so special about the *inasal* from Bacolod, that once you've tasted it there, it can't be replicated anywhere else? After all, *inasal* is really your basic chicken (*ti-il*, which is your drumstick and thigh or *pecho* which is the breast) marinated in vinegar, a little salt or soy sauce and Seven Up. When there is no Seven Up for whatever arcane reason, sugar is added. And then the house specialties come into play: a hint of *tanglad*... but just a touch so it doesn't go into *lechon* territory; some ginger to offset the *langsa* of fowl and the ubiquitous *calamansi*.

All the time, this is basted with chicken oil (pure unadulterated rendered chicken fat) with *atsuete* in it depending on your taste... The better houses of chicken *inasal* will make sure you are never offered a warmed over or reheated serving.

Anybody can do this so, again, why does it taste differently in Bacolod? Some swear that it comes down to the *tuba* vinegar in Negros. I have no idea, but there can be some truth to the assertion. I remember as a teenaged gourmand, there definitely was a difference between Coca Cola bottled in Manila as opposed to that bottled in the Visayas. And we were led to believe that it was the water... (Coke in Negros was sharper, Manila Coke was mellower. But that's another story).

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THE GALLAGAS: Juango, Peque, Datu and Madie

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Meals and memories

By Ambeth R. Ocampo

El Comedor's food may not be visually exciting, but it evokes fond memories of home and mothers

WHEN Della Besa requested me to deliver some remarks during the book-launching of "El Comedor: Meals and Memories," my first impulse was to refuse since it was the late Doreen Fernandez (who wrote the introduction to the book) that people wanted to hear. I was unfit, literally and figuratively, to step into her size 8.5 fashionable French shoes.

But then how does one refuse a teacher, colleague and friend who has since moved on to a better place where she can enjoy all the culinary flavors possible without worrying about her health? I always resisted joining Doreen, knowing that I might end up in a different place—a bit hot, and inhabited by a red man with horns, tail and pitchfork seen on bottles of Tabasco sauce.

Shortly before she passed away, Doreen invited a small group of friends to El Comedor to feast on the signature dish *cochinillo*, better known today as *lechon de leche*, a very young roasted piglet whose crispy skin and soft meat were cut up into servings with the use of a plate rather than a cleaver.

We enjoyed the *cochinillo* so much that we ignored our cholesterol levels and went back thrice and christened ourselves the "Cochinillo Gang."

Fashionably modern

El Comedor has since moved from its old location to Greenbelt 1 and changed the décor. It is now modern, bright and quite fashionable, although I admit a fondness for the dark tavern-like interiors that approximate the original 18th-century *cochinillo* restaurant in Madrid called El Botin.

Perhaps El Comedor needed a face-lift. The old place had stained glass windows, tacky Spanish accents and many dark corners where you could enjoy many a clandestine meal with your mistress.

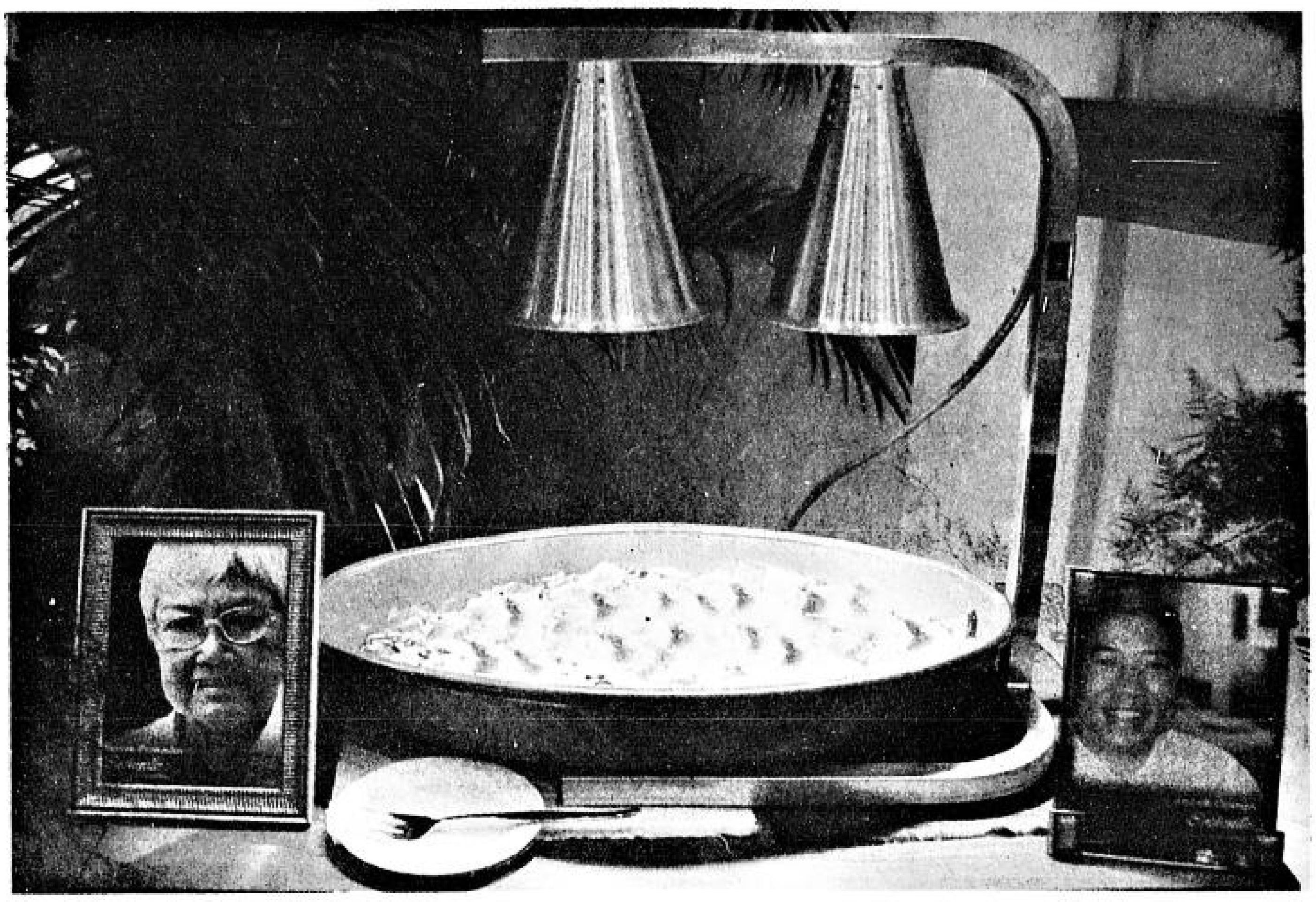
While the exterior of El Comedor has changed, the good thing is that the food has not. Now you can even cook your favorite dishes because the recipes of Lourdes P. del Rosario were compiled by Marilen and Tina Lopez, kitchen-tested and placed between the covers of the book "El Comedor Meals and Memories."

Consistent quality

There is something homey about El Comedor. The food is consistently good and the waiters seem to be part of its history, too (too bad they have since retired—one who seemed old enough to have served Manuel Luis Quezon, the first Commonwealth President).

El Comedor fare is served on special occasions—Sunday family lunches or town fiestas—the staples of Spanish-Philippine food: paella, *lengua, cocido, callos, bacalao, fabada, sopa de ajo* and all the no-no's in today's diet-conscious world that (were) not just nourishment (for us) but part of our personal histories as well.

It is hard to catch or define food that nourishes and feeds many parts of our being as well. For lack of a better term we used to call these types of food "Mama Mia food," comfort food that usually reminds us of home, home-cooking and our mothers or grandmothers. This is the secret of the relatively uncomplicated recipes in this cookbook. One does not need a Cordon Bleu or Culinary Institute of America degree to produce these dishes. They are simple and yet special.



EL COMEDOR paid tribute to Doreen Fernandez by serving her favorite *cuchinillo* during the book launch.

PHOTOS: ROGER CARPIO

THE AUTHOR (left) with Della Gamboa-Besa, sister of the late Doreen Fernandez; Tina Lopez and Marilen del Rosario-Lopez, the women behind the project "El Comedor: Meals and Memories"

The food in this book may not be as visually exciting as those created by professional chefs with their beautiful plates and architecturally arranged vegetables and subtle mixing of flavors. But (it) is something you will return to not just because it is good, but rather because it evokes fond memories of home and mothers.

Sharing herself

I was too young to know Lourdes P. del Rosario, but tasting the food resulting from her recipes gives us something of herself and the world in which she cooked. One could say Del Rosario got me into trouble during a lunch at the residence of the French ambassador some years back. I was the only one (or so he claimed) to not only invite himself to the residence but also to actually demand sóufflé as a main course.

When I was served a mountain of fluffy white meringue covered with finely chopped almonds all floating on a silver platter of caramel, the ambassador proudly asked if I had tried Ile Flotant (Floating Island) before. Without thinking I replied, "Of course, this is a Spanish-Philippine dish we call *canonigo*." Flustered, the ambassador explained that this was a French—not a Spanish or Philippine—culinary creation.

It's a miracle I have not been scratched off the French embassy guest list, but then, *canonigo* had been a part of my childhood because of El Comedor.

This dessert may also explain why the Makati Medical Center kitchen, once briefly managed by Del Rosario, is now a restaurant called "Floating Island."

There are so many stray and unrelated thoughts triggered by food and meals from Del Rosario's El Comedor restaurant and cookbook. More meals and memories are possible that would provide enough material for a novelist who might want to oust Marcel Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past," which is basically a long and complicated novel about a man eating cake.

What about a novel on *cochinillo* and *canonigo*? Now that's a challenge.

"El Comedor: Meals and Memories," with foreword by the late food writer Doreen Fernandez, was published by Anvil. The 162-page book by the mother-and-daughter team of Marilen del Rosario-Lopez and Tina Lopez is a compilation of recipes of El Comedor matriarch and founder Lourdes P. del Rosario. Some of the over 140 recipes have been with the Del Rosario family for 50 years.

E-mail the author at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Special anniversary set menus

DINING OUT

JADE Garden Cantonese Restaurant marks its 24th year this month with Two to Party set menus. Menu A includes Chiu Chow cold cuts, Seafood with Pumpkin Soup, Peking Duck served two ways, Steamed King Fish, Braised Pig Knuckle in plum sauce, Chiu Chow Broad Beans Shrimp, Shredded Duck Meat with assorted vegetables, Fried Rice with Chinese sausage and Chiu Chow Red Glutinous Rice with sago for dessert. Menu B has Roasted Suckling Pig, Braised Shark's Fin with bamboo pith and seafood soup, Fried Pigeons, Chiu Chow Broad Beans Prawns, whole Lapu-Lapu with Vegetables, Abalone Mushrooms with sea cucumber, Steamed Crab with garlic, Fried Rice with Yunan ham and shrimps, fresh fruit platter and Chiu Chow Red Glutinous Rice with sago for dessert. Jade Garden is at Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 8922319/ 8124548.

FISHING Village celebrates Mooncake Festival. Flavors available are Lotus, Red Bean and Black Bean. Champagne Spareribs, Steamed Sea Bass, Baked Lobster Minced Pork, Sauteed Scallop Chuan Chang Sauce and Stuffed Chicken are also offered.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel's Rotisserie presents Chef Goes Wild until Sept. 24. Lunch and dinner feature Seared Peppery Tuna Loin with Gaspacho Vinaigrette and Black Olives Crostini, assorted fresh Mushroom Cappuccino and Cinnamon Foam, a choice between Grilled New Zealand Lamb Chops on Herb with Whipped Potatoes and Vegetable Bouquetiere served with Port wine sauce, or Gratinated Seafood Ragout with fresh Asparagus Tips and Saffron Rice and Warm Chocolate Bread Pudding with caramel ice cream. Call 5261212.

JADE Garden's 24th anniversary set Menu B features, among others, Fried Pigeons, whole Lapu-Lapu with Vegetables, and Steamed Crab with garlic.

EDSA Shangri-La Manila's Lobby Lounge offers until Sept. 30 American-style pancakes topped with fresh fruits like bananas, mangoes, papaya, apples or blueberry. Call 6338888.

WAI Ying Fastfood offers Curry Beef Siomai, Lomaikai, Tai Pao, Steamed Spareribs, Chiu-Chao Dumpling, Asado Siopao, Ham Soi Kok, Steamed/Fried Cua Pao Kiam Pao, Rice Toppings, Noodles and Congee. Wai Ying is at 816 Benavidez St., Binondo, Manila, and 1237-1241 Benavidez St., Tondo, Manila.

GOOD Earth Tea Room at Metrowalk Complex, Ortigas, Pasig, offers Lily on the Pond, Duckquitos, Crispy Chicken Pao, Slivered Jellyfish with century egg and lobster balls, Chicken Chow Mein, Popoy's Delight, Spicy Nanking Beef, Spareribs with Mandarin Orange Sauce, Grasshopper Delight and Cocograss. Call 6872881.

SULO Hotel's Café Paraiso presents Mini Cooking Station—Oodles of Noodles on Monday; Sisig Sizzlers, Tuesday; Rolls and Dips, Wednesday; Sinuglaw and Spices, Thursday; SOUPerb Experience, Friday. Call 9245051.

THE PLAZA Penthouse's Beer Blast promo offers a 50-percent discount on San Miguel products, 6-8 p.m., Monday-Friday. The penthouse is at the East Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange, Ortigas Center, Pasig. Call 6871262/ 6319653.

HEN Lin is now serving Hen Lin Rice Meals. Choose among these popular value meals: Pork Barbecue, Lumpia Shanghai, Lechon Macau, Garlic Chicken and Porkchop. They all come with Pancit Canton and drinks. For dessert, try Black Gulaman or Almond Jelly with Lychees. Hen Lin now has over 100 outlets nationwide. Another Hen Lin branch will open soon at the Caltex station, northbound tollway, South Luzon Expressway.

DUSIT Hotel Nikko's Benkay Japanese Restaurant presents the Matsutake Festival until Sept. 30. It features mushrooms in à la carte dishes available for lunch and dinner. Call 8673333.

Hearty but easy stews

SAN Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center offers one-pot stew recipes that are hearty but easy to make, such as Beef Stew with Green Peas and Lemon Rind, Creole Chicken Stew, Stewed Pork Pata with Black Bean Sauce, and Chicken Hot Pot.

Visit www.mygreatfood.com or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center, Legaspi cor. Eagle Sts., Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.

Stewed Pork Pata with Black Bean Sauce

1 pc Monterey Pork Pata, about 1.2 kg, sliced into inch-thick pcs
¼ c dark soy sauce
1 c all-purpose flour
Magnolia Nutri-Oil for deep frying
1 c chopped white onions
2 tbsp minced garlic
3 tbsp finely chopped ginger
2 tbsp black bean sauce
3-4 c beef or chicken stock
salt and ground black pepper to taste
sesame oil
chopped spring onions

Marinate Monterey sliced pork pata in soy sauce. Set aside for at least 30 minutes. Heat Magnolia Nutri-Oil in a wok. Drain *pata* slices and dredge in flour. Deep-fry in hot oil until golden. Drain in paper towels and set aside.

Remove oil from wok and leave only ¼ c for frying. Stir fry onions, garlic, ginger and black bean sauce. Return *pata* slices to wok and pour beef or chicken stock. Allow to boil and let simmer covered until meat becomes tender. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and drizzle with sesame oil. Garnish with chopped spring onions upon serving.

Makes six to eight servings.

Chicken Hot Pot

1 kg Magnolia Chicken Cut-ups
¼ c Magnolia Nutri-oil
salt
4 cloves garlic, crushed
½ c onions, finely chopped
3 tsp ginger, finely chopped
1 pc chicken cube dissolved in 4 c water
¼ c soy sauce
3 tbsp rice wine
2 pcs star anise
1 pc cloves
1 tsp Chinese five spice
1 tbsp sugar
½ c Purefoods Fiesta Ham, strips
¼ c shiitake mushroom, sliced
½ c cornstarch dissolved in
½ c water
2 pcs sili *labuyo*, chopped
½ c carrots, strips
1 c Chinese cabbage, shredded

Rub chicken cut-ups with a little salt. Sear and set aside.

In the same pan, sauté garlic, onions and ginger. Pour the chicken stock and add soy sauce, rice wine, star anise, cloves, Chinese five-spice, sugar, fiesta ham and mushroom. Simmer for 10 minutes then add the cornstarch dissolved in water. Add the chicken, and carrots and continue simmering for five more minutes. Then at the last minute add the *sili* and cabbage. May be served with fried *sotanghon* noodles. Makes six to eight servings.

Creole Chicken Stew

1 pack Magnolia Chicken Thigh
1 ½ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
2 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ c onions, cubed
½ c green bell pepper, cubed
½ c red bell pepper, cubed
100 g Purefoods Honeycured bacon
¼ c white wine
425-g can chunky tomatoes in can
2/3 c water
½ tsp oregano
½ tsp thyme
½ tsp cumin
2 tsp hot sauce
100 g baguio beans

Rub chicken with salt and pepper. In a skillet heat olive oil and sear chicken cut-ups. Set aside.

Using the same pan, sauté garlic, onions and bell peppers. Add bacon and cook until color changes. Return chicken to the skillet and pour the wine, chunky tomatoes and water. Add oregano, thyme, cumin and hot sauce. Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer until chicken is cooked through. Add the Baguio beans and continue cooking for two to three minutes.

Makes six to eight servings.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

High-pressure selling gimmicks

THE CONSUMER
Marietta Velasco Giron

WHAT is it with supposedly rational folks that they are easily conned by sly telemarketers and aggressive salesmen?

These folks are sweet-talked into buying products and services supposedly at promotional prices. What is worse, they unwittingly divulge their credit card account numbers and other personal identity data to salespersons, some they don't even see personally. They discover too late that they have been charged exorbitantly, and the purchase had already been debited to their credit card accounts.

There's this ballerina we know who was walking at the parking lot of a shopping mall when she was approached by a salesman offering a set of household products. All of a sudden, three other sales reps appeared and sweet-talked her into viewing the products at their sales office at the third floor of the mall.

"The offer was good and I asked them to give me time to decide if I was going to buy. They asked to see my credit card, and I gave it to them, not realizing that they wasted no time in charging the items to my card."

Then there's the wife of a newspaper reporter who was coming out of the shopping mall when a sales rep talked her into buying a water purifier at the "promo price" of P30,000. The same item was being sold at P3,950 during a sale in a mall. Other victims we know include a newspaper columnist, the wife of a photographer, a former editor of a woman's magazine, a veteran garden writer and a doctor.

They all say, "I don't know why I seem to have been mesmerized by the salesman."

Just say no

We received a similar complaint last week about fast-talking telemarketers who manage to wheedle out their victim's credit card number and then debit charges to the victim's account.

Our letter sender (we will call him Mr. Phil) works at a vocational school in Mandaluyong. He is warning consumers about "wizard telemarketers" (his own words) that use high-pressure selling methods to trap unwary folks into becoming instant members of a supposedly 'exclusive' connoisseur club.

Mr. Phil said a stranger called him at the office and told him he was highly recommended by a well-respected person to be a member of the club. The salesman then rattled off so many perks that included a 50-percent discount at first class restaurants. To end the time-consuming sales talk, Mr. Phil said he advised the salesman to send the full details of the offer to his office.

At that point, the call was transferred to the salesman's boss, who wasted no time welcoming Mr. Phil to the club. The sales chat continued some more. In the end, Mr. Phil not only gave his office address, but his credit card number as well. Soon after that, a package was delivered to his office containing his membership card plus a directory of member restaurants and a personal accident insurance certificate.

As expected, the membership fee was debited to Mr. Phil's Citibank Visa account. Mr. Phil failed to mention if he had tried using the membership card in the restaurants listed.

But he did say he regretted having encouraged the telemarketers to talk about the benefits of joining the connoisseur club. "Just say no to telemarketers... and spare yourself a lot of trouble," he advised.

The bank is investigating the transaction, Mr. Phil concluded.

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Basic and advanced cooking courses

LEARN everything you need to know about getting your new catering business started with Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center's "Catering Seminar" Sept. 17-18, Friday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Topics include legal and technical aspects of the business, as well as actual cooking and preparation of popular Filipino and international dishes such as Morcon, Galantina, Baked Macaroni, Chicken Pastel, Quiche Lorraine, Eggplant Skordalia and Phyllo Chicken Crunchies. Also included are bonus salad and dessert recipes and a free "Food Service" catering cookbook.

At 9 a.m.-4 p.m., create your own visually appetizing cakes with "Cake Decorating" (Basic). Learn the fundamentals of cake decorating, coloring, designing, icing-making (boiled, butter, caramel, chocolate, sugar icing), basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flower-making and bunching.

Develop your culinary skills with other hands-on cooking courses like "Cooking I," Sept. 21-24, Tuesday-Friday, 8:30-1:30 p.m. The course covers proper hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; stocks, soups and sauces and its 1,001 applications to poultry, fish, shellfish, fruits and vegetables; common herbs and spices; purchasing; marketing and proper storage; menu planning; simple garnish and plate presentation.

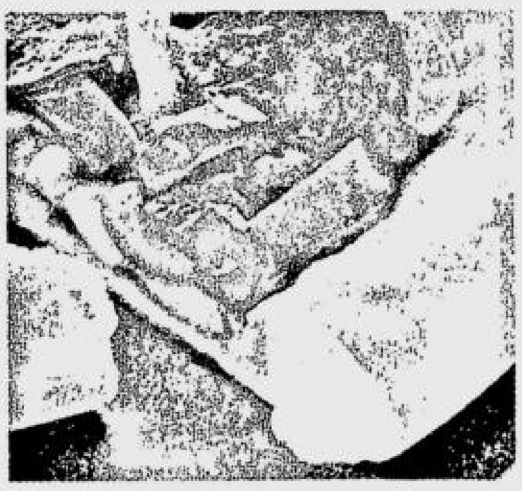
At 2-5:30 p.m., learn baking basics in "Baking I," which offers techniques applied to the preparation of pies, quick breads, cakes and more. The course comes with a free cookbook.

On "Doughnuts to Go," Sept. 18, Saturday, 1:30-5 p.m., try something new with plain and fancy variations like Strawberry, Banana, Pineapple, Butterscotch and Coffee Jelly.

Old reliable recipes for everyday fare can be learned in "Rice Toppings." Spice up your rice in different ways and learn Tapa Tips Garlic Rice, Crispy Corned Beef Kabubha Rice, Sweet and Sour Pork Parsleyed Rice, Tofu Teriyaki rice and a bonus Spaghetti Laing. This is set on Sept. 25, Saturday, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Finally, jazz up your breakfast table with "Pinoy Breads," Sept. 25, Saturday, 1:30-5 p.m. Learn how to make *pandesal* with filling (Adobo, Spanish Bread) and other bread specialties like *ensaymada*, Mongo Loaf, Rainbow Bread, Banana Bread and Raisin Bread.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays to Saturdays) at the 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City, or call 8921185 or 8925011, loc. 108. E-mail mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph.



NEW PIZZA CRUST STUFFING
Pizza Hut presents Cream Cheese Stuffed Crust Pizza, the latest in its Stuffed Crust line. The new product features Kraft Philadelphia cream cheese inside a crispy crust. Pizza Hut launched its stuffed crust line in 2000. The line now includes the Cheesy Crust, Double Stuffed Crust and Sausage Stuffed Crust. Pizza Hut's Cream Cheese Stuffed Crust Pizza is available in both regular and family sizes, for dine-in, take-out and delivery nationwide.

Bacolod Inasal the Ilocano way

From page E1

Dear Peque,

Like authentic *inasal*, I don't really know what it is about you. There's yet much to be discovered. What I've realized is this: With or without the trimmings that come with your person and, in the absence of applause, it's the kindness of your heart, the genuineness of your spirit, the divine gift of wit and wisdom borne out of a life well lived that I hold most dear. *Amigo mio*, you are seasoned to perfection. Thank you for making life beautiful!

Reggie's Authentic 'Ilong-cano' Inasal

(No one could give me an exact recipe so I had to create my own. Adjust recipe to taste. If you want it sweeter, add sugar etc. In case you didn't know, *inasal* means to roast.)

1 k whole chicken
¼ c *tuba* vinegar
1 tsp salt
3 tbsp soy sauce
1 c Seven Up
2 lemon grass hearts (bottom part of *tanglad*), bruised
4 thin ginger slices
2 tbsp *calamansi* juice
1 tbsp pepper

Stuff ginger and lemon grass in chicken cavity. Combine other ingredients, marinate chicken for 6 hours/ overnight

To make chicken oil, combine 1 k chicken skin with 3 tbsp water. Heat pan, add chicken skin to extract oil. Strain. To oil, add 3 tsp *achuete* seeds while hot until oil takes color. Strain. Use oil to baste chicken while roasting.

Roast over coal.

For comments or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.

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Do the Pinoy favorites

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts has released the following schedule of classes:

Sept. 17 (Friday) Pinoy Favorites Done My Way (all new)—Classic and Lengua Sisig with Aioli, Seafood Tokwa't Baboy, Chicken Inasal and All Its Condiments (Bacolod Chicken), Lechon Manok and Condiments, Classic Kare-kare with Chocolate Bagoong, Salmon Belly Kare-kare with Citrus Bagoong, Leche Flan.

Sept. 18 (Saturday) Asian Barbecue Meals (all new)—Korean Beef Rib Barbecue with Kimchi Fried Rice, Authentic Indonesian Satays (Beef, Chicken, Pork, Lamb, Seafood), Authentic Peanut Sauce, Nasi Goreng, Vietnamese Shrimp on Sugar Cane, Pork Sticks, Crab Meat Fried Rice.

Sept. 20 (Monday) The Best of the Mediterranean 1 (all new)—Pita with Hummus and Baba Ghannouj (Eggplant Puree), Feta Cheese Salad, Moussaka, Braised Moroccan Lamb with Merguez (Lamb Sausage) and Couscous, Fried Baccalao with Garlic Sauce, Turkish Saffron Chicken, Baklava

Sept. 22 (Wednesday) Traditional Binalot—Fried Pork and Adobo Flakes with Chicharon Chips and Salted Egg Relish, Guinataang Sugpo and Gabi with Bagoong Rice, Tilapia with Shrimp Paste Roasted Tomatoes, Caramelized Onions and Talaba Rice, Nilagang Tadyang na Baka with Pandan Rice and Bean Sprout Salad, Bulalo Steak with Fried Bulalo Rice and Mushroom Gravy with Spring Vegetables

Call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162, 0917-8399888.

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Christine Aldeguer

Skin concerns: first signs of fine lines

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Visible Results: Virtually erased fine lines. Fresh, supple and vibrant skin.

Irene Salud

Skin concerns: fine lines around the eyes, age spots

FCC's Solution: **Skin Tone Re-energizer** firms, tones, and re-energizes facial and neck muscles to prevent further deterioration of ageing skin, improve facial contours and minimize little crow's feet and lines. Coupled with **Repéchage 4-Layer Facial,** which rejuvenates, nourishes and moisturizes skin to achieve a clearer, more youthful look.

Visible Results: Visibly diminished lines. Fresh, resilient skin on the eye area and on the whole face.

Patty Betita

Skin concerns: undereye circles, blackheads, whiteheads

FCC's Solution: **Lymphatic Drainage Treatment** detoxifies facial tissues and reduces eye area shadows and puffiness. Coupled with **Diamond Peel,** which effectively exfoliates, thoroughly rids skin of blackheads and whiteheads, prevents breakouts, and regenerates skin, giving it a healthy glow.

Visible Results: Remarkably reduced undereye circles. Clear, blemish-free, radiant skin.

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